

The Pearl Of Great Price

Introduction. Matthew 13 contains a series of our Lord's parables. These parables express one general theme of the gradual growth, surpassing worth, and certain triumph of the kingdom of God. The parable of the sower explains the different hearts of men and how they receive the word of God (13:3-23). The parables of the tares and the net explain the separation of good and evil and the judgment of God (13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50). The parables of the mustard seed and leaven are given to illustrate the growth of the kingdom (13:31-33). Finally, the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price emphasize the surpassing worth of membership in the kingdom (13:44-46).

In the parable of the hidden treasure, Jesus was depicting the "value" of the kingdom to one who accidentally finds it. Paul's conversion is an example of how one is willing to give up all in order to lay hold of the "treasure" of the kingdom. The value of the kingdom can be seen when we consider that it is a refuge from the powers of darkness (Colossians 1:13), a domain of righteousness, peace, and joy (Romans 14:17-18), an unshakeable kingdom (Hebrews 12:25-29), and its members are destined for eternal glory (Matthew 13:41-43).

Unfortunately, we live in a society where people know the cost of a lot but the value of very little. We seem to have little concept of what is or should be most important in our lives. In answer to the question as to what is valuable, Jesus asks us to consider the pearl of great price.

I. **Identification Of The Pearl**

- A. Everyone has a pearl of great price whether it is a conscious choice or not. They have something they consider to be of more value than anything else, something for which they are giving their lives. Lots of people made the choice for many reasons.
 - 1. Financial security -- Rich fool (Luke 12:16-21).
 - 2. Sinful pleasures -- Epicurians (Acts 17:18).
 - 3. Worldly power and prestige -- Alexander the Great (Matthew 20:25-27).
 - 4. Wisdom and education -- Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:22).
- B. Jesus identifies the true pearl of great price as the kingdom of God. Nothing is of more value than salvation from sin and citizenship in the kingdom (Philippians 3:7-9).
- C. Its value is seen in what its possession means.
 - 1. It means that no matter how physically poor you are, you are spiritually rich (2 Corinthians 8:9; James 2:5; Revelation 3:18).
 - 2. It means that no matter how physically hungry you become, you can be spiritually filled (Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 5:6; Luke 14:16-17).

3. It means that no matter how troubling your life gets, you can find a sense of security (Psalm 46:1-3; 84:5; Isaiah 25:4).
 4. It means that you have the finest blessings heaven can offer: peace with God, the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of eternal life (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:5).
- D. Objects of great value have a tendency to become more valuable over time (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). This is certainly true with regard to the pearl of great price or the kingdom of God. Its value increases with time, death, judgment, and eternity.

II. ***Identification Of The Seeking Merchant***

- A. He was a man who truly desired and appreciated what was good in life. This desire and appreciation is necessary to improvement (physically or spiritually). He must have been a lot like Mary in Luke 10:38-42.
- B. He was a man who was able to discern value.
1. He knew the difference between good, better, and best.
 2. This discerning mind is necessary to being a Christian (Philippians 1:9-10).
 - a) The Bereans show us that we must be students of the scriptures. We must "search them daily" and apply them (Acts 17:11).
 - b) It means that we prove or learn the genuineness of the world's doctrines by going to the Bible (2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1).
- C. He was a man who was determined and committed to the goal of obtaining the pearl of great value.
1. He was much different than the rich young ruler who sought the pearl but was unwilling to pay the price (Matthew 19:16, 22)!
 2. He was a lot like the Ethiopian eunuch who was willing to make whatever sacrifices necessary to be a child of God (Acts 8:26-39)!
 3. This parable is not suggesting that we can "buy" or "earn" our salvation.
 - a) Salvation is a gift (Romans 6:23).
 - b) We can "buy" salvation only in the sense of gaining rightful possession of it.
 - (1) Which we do by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - (2) Which we do when we submit to the working of God and the renewing the Holy Spirit when we are baptized (John 3:3, 5; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5).

III. ***How The Merchant Made The Great Purchase***

- A. He made it immediately.
1. The people at Pentecost (Acts 2:41).

2. The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33).
- B. He made it with joy.
 1. The Samaritans (Acts 8:8).
 2. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39).
- C. He made it with great personal sacrifice.
 1. Luke 14:25-33.
 2. Hebrews 11:24-26.
- D. It is sad to see Christians who have supposedly found this great pearl treat it as a common trinket. How can we show great diligence in obtaining this pearl when Christians:
 1. Fail to attend every opportunity to study and worship God?
 2. Never try to show others the greatness of the pearl?
 3. Refuse to live pure, holy, and without blame?

Conclusion. Can you imagine the joy this man felt upon buying this pearl, holding it in his hand, and knowing that it was his! How much greater the joy of knowing that we are citizens of the kingdom of God, having been forgiven of our sins, and filled with the hope of eternity. What about you? Do you possess the pearl of great value? Unlike the purchase of a single pearl, in this purchase there is enough for everyone, even you, if you will be like the merchant.

You may be lost in your present state of understanding of God's will. But if you will search like the merchant, and have the desire to understand and please God like the Ethiopian eunuch, the Bereans, Cornelius, Lydia, and many others, then you can trust in God's providence to lead you to the truth, and to the pearl of great price!

Is the pearl of great price worth it? I wish those who have passed on could give us their perspective. Although they may have suffered greatly in this life, I am confident they would say that experiencing the ultimate blessings of the kingdom of heaven is worth it all! But the blessings of the kingdom are not limited to the life hereafter; as Jesus reassured Peter, there are a hundred times the blessings for us now (Mark 10:28-30). Do you not desire this pearl of great price? Are you even searching?