

The Pearl of Great Price

Mt. 13:45-46 [The Parable of the Merchant Man]

All these parables illustrate God has a plan for mankind. The first four parables show how the devil seeks to thwart God's plan by: (1) hindering the seed from bearing fruit; (2) planting counterfeit agents along side of the true children of the kingdom; (3) lodging false apostles amongst the branches of kingdom; (4) kneading false doctrine into the meal.

Jesus teaches His disciples privately in these last three parables that God's plan will not be thwarted.

Remember, "*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*" deal with the interval of time between Israel's rejection of their Messiah/King to the return of the King. God's plan for establishing His kingdom on earth was not abandoned—It is held in a "mystery form" until Christ returns.

➡ This parable is similar to the parable of the hidden treasure (v. 44).

1. Both parables deal with something valuable a man purchases at great cost.
2. In the parable of the hidden treasure, the treasure is hid **in a field**. This parable concerns a valuable pearl found **in the sea**.
3. The pearl is NOT compared to the kingdom of heaven (unlike the hidden treasure)—Rather, the merchant man is likened to the kingdom. Therefore, this parable represents a different aspect of the kingdom than the hidden treasure.

God's treasure is Israel. Jesus purchased the field (the world) and the treasure within the world. Israel is now hidden in the world, scattered amongst the nations. But one day it will be restored in glory.

But, Israel is not the only concern of God. God also has a great love for the church (Eph. 5:25). Just as Israel is God's hidden treasure today—So the church was "*the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been **hid in God***" (Eph. 3:9). The church is that "*one pearl of great price.*"

- I. **The PURSUER of the pearl**—The merchant man (a procurer of fine jewels) = Christ, the King of the kingdom of heaven.

A. His **EVALUATION** of the pearl—“*goodly pearls*”— Something worth pursuing. He regarded the pearl to be very valuable—of “*great price.*”

1. **The value of the human soul.** *"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Mark 8:36,37).

One soul is more valuable than the entire world.

2. The merchantman sought "*goodly*" pearls. With this merchant man representing the kingdom of heaven, it is not surprising to see an emphasis on high quality. God's kingdom calls for the best.

➡ The church needs that attitude today. The work of the church is the most important work on earth today. Why? Because it deals with the two most valuable commodities on earth—Souls and the Bible. The value of Christ's work should be reflected in every aspect of our ministry:

- Our facilities should reflect the value of Christ's work— They should be clean, comfortable, and attractive. How can we expect to honor God in a facility that reflects poor workmanship and inferior furnishings.
- Our publications should reflect the value of Christ's work—Tracts, brochures, and church bulletins should not look like an accident from a copy machine.
- Our services should reflect the value of Christ's work— Our services should put forth quality music... neatly dressed greeters/ushers... quality audio efficiency, and a clear, unde(,) -0.4 -0.2 (n) 0.4 (d) n0.4 () - TJ0.1 (ti) -0.1 (n) 0.

2. Precious gems are not found by a casual search. You will never succeed in anything worthwhile if your efforts are half-hearted and inconsistent. If your spiritual life is stagnant, most likely it is because you are not being persistent attending church, studying your Bible, and communing with God in prayer.

II. **The PICTURE of the PEARL** = Picture of the Church.

- A. The **FINDING** of the pearl. Pearls must be found. They cannot find themselves. They cannot lift themselves from the sea.
 - ➡ Pearls are taken from the sea. The sea in the Bible pictures the peoples of the world (Rev. 17:15). God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14).
 1. Pearls are found at the bottom of the sea in dark and murky places.
 2. Pearls are taken from a state of uselessness to a state of beauty.
- B. The **FORMING** of the pearl.
 - ➡ There is not much to the composition of a pearl. Crush it and all you'll have is a little lime. The value of the pearl is how it came into existence.
 - ➡ A pearl is not a precious stone like the diamond. It is formed by a living organism—in the heart of a living oyster.
 1. **Produced through suffering.** A particle of foreign matter (grain of sand) becomes lodged in the side of the oyster. It begins to cut into the tender tissues of the oyster. The oyster secretes a substance called Nacre [na-kar], aka Mother of Pearl. Layer upon layer is formed around that grain of sand until it is a beautiful pearl.
 - a) Like the oyster, Christ bore our sin in His own body. Our sin was an intrusion upon Him—a foreign substance—He knew no sin, but was made to be sin for us.
 - b) Christ's response to our sin. He covers us in the **white** robe of His righteousness.

- c) As the pearl is the oyster's answer to that which wounded it—we are the product of Christ being wounded for our transgressions.
 - d) The pearl owes its existence to the oyster's willingness to cover that which hurt it. We owe our salvation to Christ's willingness to take our place on the cross.
 - e) Our part was the cutting—Christ's part was the covering.
 - f) "Calvary covers it all!"
 - g) Layer upon layer of God's love was poured out at Calvary in the form of Christ's blood as a covering for our sins! We have become His pearl of great price!
 - h) Revelation 21:21—*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl*—As we enter into that heavenly city, we'll be reminded that we can only enter because we are His pearl of great price!
2. **Formed slowly and secretly** (years)—The church is formed gradually as the Spirit convicts and converts sinners. No one can see the making of the pearl, for it is hidden in the shell of the oyster under the waters. No one can see the actual growth of His church in the world. The church is among all the nations today and one day will be revealed in its beauty.
 3. **Formed intact.** Unlike a diamond, it cannot be cut to enhance its beauty. The minute you cut it, you ruin it.
 - ➡ A finished diamond is the work of man. It's beauty depends on the skill and tools of the diamond cutter. The finished pearl is the work of God. It cannot be added to or diminished from.
- C. The **FULLNESS** of the pearl. "One" pearl speaks of the unity of the church that God is forming (Eph. 4:4-6). It is one church / one body of saved Jews and Gentiles. Galatians 3:28 says believers "*are all one in Christ Jesus.*"
 - D. The **FUTURE** of the pearl. One day, the pearl will be put on display before the universe (Eph. 2:7; 5:27).

III. The **PAYMENT** for the pearl—“...sold all that he had, and bought it.”

➡ The condescension of Christ—“...*though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*” (2 Cor. 8:9).

A. The **PRICE** (v. 46—“*great price*”) = The blood of Christ. Christ died for the church (Eph. 5:25). He gave His all to purchase us for Himself. “*Jesus paid it all...*”

➡ The best has a high price tag. In our age of discount stores, we sometimes forget if you want the best, you must pay for it. Salvation is free to us, but it wasn’t “cheap.” It cost God the best that He had.

B. The **POSSESSION**. Once purchased, the pearl becomes the property of Christ. We are His “*purchased possession*” (Eph. 1:14).

➡ 1 Corinthians 6:20 — *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*

➡ You are His pearl of great price—You and I were buried in a sea of sin, lost, just a grain of sand, and He has poured out His love upon you until you have become His goodly pearl.

SUMMATION: The price Christ paid to purchase us was extremely great. No higher price could be paid. How much, therefore, we owe to Him in service and loyalty. If you are not motivated by what Jesus Christ’s paid to redeem you at Calvary, you have something seriously wrong in your soul.

Comments are welcome. Please [CLICK HERE](#).