

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM - PART VII
The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Text: Matthew 13:45,46

Key Word: Value

Key Thought: God Has Placed a Great Value upon Those Whom He Has Set out to Purchase

As in the previous parable of the Hidden Treasure this parable was spoken by Jesus to His disciples behind closed doors. The last parable told of a treasure that was discovered.

This is again a parable without an interpretation. As we've discovered, this often leads to misinterpretation. This parable is no exception. **It seems like the most popular interpretation is that the Pearl is Christ Himself.** This creates problems because . . .

1. The parable would then be out of harmony with the continued teaching of Jesus. The sower, the man, and now the merchant all represent One Person - Jesus.
2. It would falsely teach that a sinner can sacrifice all he had to purchase the Lord. It also would show us seeking God, not God seeking us.

We must be very careful what we believe because it will affect our actions.

"there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God."

Romans 3:11

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Luke 19:10

To either buy or get God totally violates the clear teaching of Scripture. Eternal life is a free gift from God (Romans 6:23). No sinner has ever sought out, purchased or possessed the Lord.

As We Look Closer into the 2 Main Parts of this Parable We Will Clearly See What Jesus Meant.

I. THE MERCHANT

II. THE PEARL

I. THE MERCHANT

The term that is used here had the primary meaning of **someone who would go on a ship as a passenger**. This passenger had a specific reason for his travel. It came to mean a **"wholesale dealer"** in contrast to a **"retail dealer."** **In other words, it spoke of a man who would travel long distances in search of goods that he could then import to his country.**

The merchant was not one who could be easily fooled by a product of inferior quality. **He knew how to assess the value of the product that he was about to purchase.** Upon finding something of great value, **he would not regret the cost of its purchase.**

The word used for **"looking"** or **"seeking"** is a word that implies **"leaving one place to go to another."** It literally means **"to go away"** which implies both an actual departure from one place and an arrival at a certain destination. **In the previous parable, the treasure was "found."** **In this parable the pearl was "sought."**

This parable must be viewed as God would from heaven. Our Lord perceived that there was something that He viewed as precious from the heights of heaven. **He left heaven not only to seek out this valuable pearl but also to obtain it by selling all He had.** Here is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ offering His very life for the purchase of His Church. Though He was rich, He became poor to purchase us (II Corinthians 8:9).

*"Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
7. but made himself nothing (emptied), taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
8. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"*

Philippians 2:6-8

Nothing is of more value than life itself. When we've given our life, we've given our all. **Our Merchant gave all He had to purchase His Church.**

II. THE PEARL

Jesus knew everything about the pearl. Where it came from; how it was formed and its real value. **It's interesting that a pearl is never mentioned in the Old Testament.** In fact, **pearls were never considered as precious to the Jewish people.** This probably really opened the disciple's ears to hear what the Lord would say. No Jew would be seeking after a pearl. The city of Nineveh became renown for its high-priced pearls.

The word "*pearl*" is derived from a Sanscrit (ancient classical language of India) word which means "*pure*." Anyone who bears the name "*Margaret*" or "*Margarita*" bears the meaning of that word. The pearl still bears the meaning of purity in our culture. **When women wear a bead of pearls around their neck, they are portraying a message of their pure beauty.** There are plenty of people in our world who don't recognize the value of those close to them.

The unique thing about a pearl is that it is the product of a living organism. This is not true of any other precious stone (i.e., - sapphire, diamond, emerald etc.). **There is nothing in our world that resembles how a pearl is fashioned.**

A pearl is formed as of a result of an injury done to an oyster. Usually, a grain of sand enters the shell of an oyster. The area it injures begins to be covered with the nacre. Layer upon layer is created until it becomes transformed into the desired pearl. **The little grain of sand becomes clothed in beauty.** Has not God also taken a thing of injury and transformed it into a desired thing? **Only God can produce beauty and worth out of suffering.**

A pearl never takes on a large size. Yet it can become priceless because of the beauty of its formation. **Size does not always determine its value.** **If a pearl is left indefinitely in the oyster, it will eventually destroy the oyster.** **It must be harvested at the correct time.**

A pearl is formed slowly and surely. **It is secretly formed.** Has not the Church of God been forming for almost 2,000 years with little notice by most people?

Consider also the lowly origin of the pearl. An oyster lives at the bottom of a sea. **It survives amongst the scavengers in the midst of the mire.** Throughout scripture the sea is a **type of godless humanity.** It is the abode of the nations of the world with all its variety of people, languages and cultures. **It is always in a state of change.** Often it becomes a place of upheaval and turmoil. **Hidden in its depth is a pearl in the process of becoming valuable.**

We must never forget the pit from which we've come from.

II. THE PEARL (Contd.)

"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)

12. remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world."

13. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:11-13

As a diver descends into the depth of the ocean, he risks his life. There are many dangers beneath the depth of the waters. Predators constantly comb the ocean in search of food. Seaweed can entangle a diver. Also, both his descent and ascent must be timed correctly. **Once an oyster with a pearl inside is located (and not all oysters contain pearls) it is quickly detached from its bed and brought to light.**

"The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

5. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

6. In my distress I called to the LORD I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears . . .

16. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters."

Psalm 18:4-6,16

There is a reason why Jesus would come to earth to "find" us. **Like any merchant, the reason for purchasing any item is not for himself. As pearls adorn the crowns of Monarchs so will we also be given the privilege some day to display the glory of God.**

What a beautiful message this was to His disciples. They needed assurance that there would be a reason for some of the things that they had already faced and would be facing in the near future. It is also a valuable message for the Church today. Many cannot see the beauty that is surrounding us daily because they only look on the outward appearance. **No one would believe that an ugly oyster could bring forth such a beautiful and valuable pearl.**

II. THE PEARL (Contd.)

We need to beware of cultured pearls. They may look the same and perhaps even go through the process, **but their environment is protected. When man interferes with God's ways, we always produce something inferior and less beautiful.** The trained eye of a jeweller can tell what is genuine.

Do you see yourself as God sees you? **The Kingdom of Heaven is made up of what God calls fine “pearls.” He has made us valuable in His sight.**

C:\Documents\WPWin(X9)Sermons.19\Parables/Matthew13_45.46.wpd

Date: May 19/19

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: I'm Forever Grateful - A

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Romans 3:11; Luke 19:10; Romans 6:23

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II. THE PEARL - *Ephesians 2:11-13; Psalm 18:4-6,16*