

## The Parables of Our Lord

### The Parable of The Hidden Treasure & The Pearl of Great Price

Wednesday July 27th, 2022

By way of reminder:

- Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived
- The crowds were astonished by the way He taught
- He used parables
  - Only used by Jesus in the NT
  - Rare in the OT (Nathan the Prophet & King David is one example)
- Parable means “to throw something alongside something else” ie, a comparison thrown alongside a truth
- Jesus used parables to reveal deeper truths to those who have been given understanding but used them in judgment against those who had not been given understanding.
- Main theme of most parables was the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven)
- We never interpret parables allegorically
  - Look for a single, clear main point in a given parable (though there are sometimes exceptions)

Parable of The Hidden Treasure & The Pearl Of Great Price (Matthew 13:44-46):

- These parables are concerned with “value”
- Discuss the subjective appraisal of worth to an individual
- Arguments over money are a frequent cause for divorce in America
- We have a problem of SUBJECTIVE value where it intersects with and relates itself to ethics (ethics having to do what we are OBJECTIVELY supposed to do).

- We, as well as God, both have value systems and our value systems don't always line up with the values that God has for the things of this world.

Jesus announces something of infinite value to people who largely don't place a high value upon it. These two parables both make a point that is spiritual in nature and they illustrate His point.

#### The Hidden Treasure:

- Parable of a man who finds treasure in a field
- We can relate to this idea from movies we see, books we read, etc. Pirates of the Caribbean, The Goonies, whatever and Jesus, too provides familiar imagery here to the folks He's speaking with.
- Hiding treasure in a field was common
  - Couldn't go to a bank (there was no "First National Bank of Jerusalem")
  - Needed to protect your valuables from an invading army
  - Keep it safe from bandits / thieves

Regarding this parable, perhaps the person who buried it died and no one recovers their treasure, time passes, and this particular man in the parable might be working in the field one day and hears a sound with his tools and sees that he's uncovered a container with a large fortune within it. He doesn't know the owner of the field so he goes and sells everything that he owns to satisfy an all-consuming need to raise enough money to buy this field. Naturally once he buys it, he can uncover the treasure, and it will then become his.

The point of the parable is a simple one: this guy finds something that was so valuable that he would do anything to have it. He would give up everything that he had and sell everything that

he could. He knew there was treasure there of priceless value and he was overjoyed by his finding out the value of the treasure.

Jesus throws another parable right alongside this one:

#### The Pearl of Great Price:

- A jewelry merchant in the business of buying and selling pearls. A wholesaler. He goes out and finds pearls and then resells them at a higher value.
- Much like the American reality television show of the antique pickers some years back
- Pearls were more rare than
- They could have higher value than diamonds/rubies/emeralds/gold/etc.
  - Free divers had to procure them.
  - Throw themselves overboard with a weight
  - Dangerous depths, no chance of rescue
  - Currents, Sharks, etc.
- If you had pearls, you had a fortune
  - Brings new meaning when Jesus said not to cast your pearls before swine. The idea of casting something so valuable in front of people who have nothing but contempt for truth. Maximum absurdity
- Pearls could be considered great investments since they would have increased in value over time.

So this merchant one day came upon this exquisite pearl that was so bright, so perfect, so beautiful that all of the other pearls in his collection seemed to be insignificant. So the man sells his whole collection of jewels, his entire business. He knows that he must have that pearl, the “pearl of great price”.

The common point in these two parables is that you find something extremely valuable and it's worth selling everything you own in order to have it. And Jesus is saying, "This is how valuable the Kingdom of God is".

Provide:

- [Economic illustration of the Shoe Manufacturer, the Store Owner, and the Consumer]
- [Illustration of the Cattle Farmer and the Shoe Manufacturer]

Jesus asks the question: "What will a man gain in exchange for his soul?". He is asking "How much value do you put on your soul?". What if the Fire Department calls and says that your home is on fire and they can't save your house. But you have five minutes to get everything out of your house. What do you grab? Keep in mind you only have 5 minutes...

And Jesus is asking, "How important to you is your soul?". We know that our bodies are very important to us. Doctors and other medical professionals have effectively become the high priests of the modern world. After all, economically speaking, doctors are valued far greater in our society than Pastors. I think that has a lot to say about the degree to which we consider the value of our souls. Jesus asked, "What will you give in exchange for your soul?"

Good question: What would you trade for your salvation? I can't imagine a single, solitary Christian being willing to trade anything for his salvation. The early Christians wouldn't exchange their lives for their salvation because they found that treasure and they found the pearl of great price and they were willing to die because they realized that in their whole lives there was nothing more precious than having and possessing Jesus. The pearl of great price is a **Person**. If you have Him, you have absolutely everything!

Both of these parables communicate spiritual truth: everything in this entire world that is considered worthwhile or important is counted as **loss** when compared with the overwhelming value of knowing and possessing Christ and being part of His everlasting, eternal Kingdom. The Kingdom is priceless, it has inestimable value. In Christ, we have the treasure that is eternal, incorruptible, undefiled, and is reserved in Heaven for us as believers. We are therefore exceedingly rich beyond measure.

Consider too, that the Kingdom of God is a heavenly treasure lying buried in the field of our own accursed, corrupt, sin-sick world. Consider how it's a prize that if found, is sufficient to make every single one of us immeasurably wealthy for all eternity. This treasure is salvation, it is the forgiveness of sin, it is the love of God, His very presence, it is Christ Himself. And that's why only a total fool wouldn't give everything he owns in order to have it.

A few of other aspects / lessons with regard to these parables:

- The Kingdom of God is invisible
  - It comes with no fanfare, most pay no attention (Luke 17:20)
  - No one knows the things of God except the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11)
  - Unless a man is born again, he cannot SEE the Kingdom (John 3:3)
  - The Kingdom of God is hidden from the carnal mind
    - The carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7)
  - Unregenerate minds cannot fathom why we prize the Kingdom so much
    - No understanding of why someone would submit to the Lordship of Christ voluntarily
    - Nor why someone would give up the pleasures of sin and the delights of the world

- People are blind to the Kingdom by nature - there are none who seek after God (Rom. 3:11)
- The Kingdom of God is given/dispensed personally
  - The key figures in the parable are INDIVIDUALS
  - Jesus was talking to people who were confident of inheriting the Kingdom by virtue of being born a Jew, a part of the nation of Israel
    - Many people in our own day do this: by virtue of faithful church attendance, faithful tithing, being baptized, etc they feel entitled to automatic entry into Heaven
- Salvation carries a high cost
  - Authentic faith is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is
  - Salvation is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is
  - We don't gain instant victory over sinful desires/habits/etc. but we push back and fight sin and we develop a love for god, for righteousness
    - Those who never come to repentance and/or who don't have any love for righteousness have never truly believed
  - Jesus Himself turned people away all the time who showed a shallow faith that didn't have any real, authentic commitment

Jesus is saying that with regard to the value system of God, the Kingdom of God is the thing that surpasses everything else. We must have the pearl of great price. We must have that treasure that's hidden in the field. Because nothing compares with its value. We need to love what Jesus loves and hate what Jesus hates. We must chase after that which Jesus chases after. We must run from that which Jesus wants us to run from. That's what our life as Christians is all about. Let's count the cost of following Christ. If we do so meaningfully, we will see that the Pearl and the Treasure are so rich and so valuable, that it is all worth letting go of every earthly

pleasure in exchange for. In the words of Pastor Dale while he was discipling me a few years back while he was in Seattle, "If we would just let go of that \$10 bill that we hold onto so firmly, we would realize that God is trying so hard to hand us \$10,000,000,000".