

Finding Your Pearls

Matthew 13:44-46 NIV

Preface

Illus: Demonstrate with a metal detector how people search for hidden treasures and valuables with them. We've all seen people out scouring the land looking for valuables with these devices.

When you think about it, everyone is on a treasure hunt. We are all looking for things like peace, wealth and satisfaction in life.

Today we read a short parable that compares finding Jesus with finding a treasure. As we read this text, consider it carefully for it is much deeper than it may appear on the surface.

Scripture

⁴⁴ *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”* ⁴⁵ *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Matthew 13:44-46 NIV*

Introduction

We must first understand what is meant by “The kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of heaven is the reign of God in a person’s heart. The kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost. It is the influence of God in your life.

For some people, every aspect of their life is influenced by God. For others God is simply who they come to hear about on Sunday morning. And for some, God is just a concept about which they have a philosophical theory or opinion. Such people have not discovered the kingdom of heaven.

Finding the kingdom of heaven is finding the one thing in life that is truly lasting. Knowing and living for Christ is the ultimate treasure one can possess.

In Matthew 7:6, Jesus says *“do not throw your pearls to pigs...”* If you seek what the world offers rather than God’s will in your life, you are throwing that which is precious into the pigpen. You are throwing away the kingdom of heaven in your life.

Let’s look at important principles we can learn from this parable.

1. The kingdom of heaven is Priceless

Finding Jesus Christ is finding the most valuable thing in your life. Jesus uses the parable of a merchant finding a pearl of great value. The phrase “great value” literally means “priceless.”

Of all the things you crave, knowing Christ is the only thing that will bring real peace. There is nothing more valuable than experiencing the kingdom of heaven personally in your life.

To have God rule over your life is a treasure so precious that once obtained, a person is willing to surrender anything that might interfere with having it.

2 Corinthians 4:7 says that while our bodies are like clay pots, what believers have inside is a priceless treasure: *“But we have the treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”* 1 Peter 1:7 says that our faith is *“of greater worth than gold.”*

How valuable is your relationship with God? What have you surrendered to Him? I want to tell you frankly and honestly; **you have not surrendered your all to him, you do not know Him at all.** For the Bible tells us that when we discover Christ, He becomes Lord of everything we have. He is priceless.

2. The kingdom of heaven is personal

Knowing Christ is a highly personal experience. Each individual must respond with their entire being to the Spirit of God.

Experiencing the kingdom of God doesn’t just happen automatically. Just because you grew up in the church doesn’t mean you know Christ.

The call to conversion is personal and unique to each individual. Jesus says, *“You must be born again.”* Each one must personally and individually respond to Christ.

Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned...”* John 5:24

Life is fragile. Life is like but a vapor quickly gone. Have you found the treasure of the kingdom of God? Have you discovered the one thing that will bring you lasting peace? Who is Lord of your life? Is it Jesus Christ or is it you?

Do you know him personally?

3. The kingdom of heaven involves searching

Spiritual truth is often hidden. Millions of people walk all around the treasures of God but never recognize it. Some people seem to stand right on the treasure and can't see it.

While there are some who know the priceless value of their relationship with Christ, **most of the world has no clue of the treasures of God.**

Jesus said, in Matthew 13 that the meaning of the parables is made clear to his followers but hidden for those who do not want to listen. Paul says *"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them."* 1 Cor 2:14

Paul writes, *"My determined purpose is that I may know Him, that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person."* Philippians 3:10

Have you found the treasure of the kingdom of God?

4. The kingdom of heaven means being found

No one discovers Christ by their own doing and power. God's Holy Spirit is always involved in drawing us to God.

Sometimes we discover the Spirit of God through Christ in the midst of the death of a loved one. Sometimes we discover him while searching for answers to our struggles.

The woman at the well was looking for water but had the thirst of her soul quenched. Paul was traveling the road to Damascus for the purpose of arresting Christians. He was knocked off his high horse and he discovered the treasure of Jesus Christ.

The Philippian jailer was about to take his own life when Paul stopped him. He asked, "What must I do to be saved?" In the answer, he discovered the priceless kingdom of heaven.

Illus: Charles Spurgeon was one of the great preachers of the 1800s. He told of how as a young man, he attended church because it was the proper thing to do. One Sunday a blizzard prevented the preacher from making it. One of the men in the church read Isaiah 45:22, *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else."*

In his own words Spurgeon said, "God opened my heart to the salvation message." Is God calling you to look to him today?

5. The kingdom of heaven changes everything

To those who do not know the Spirit of God, Christianity is drudgery. It is viewed as necessary if one is to avoid hell. But to Jesus, it is God's offer of the opportunity of a lifetime. It is a treasure found that is so valuable, so priceless that the recipient will give up everything to experience it.

This week I reflected on this in my own life:

No more fearing death - I once feared death especially since my father died at 42. With Christ, there is no more fear of death for there is a dwelling place already prepared by Christ.

No more feeling inferior - Discovering Christ allows me to know I am made with certain talents and abilities if I will just use them for God's glory. I do not have to compare myself to others. I just need to make sure I am becoming what God wants me to be.

Peace in the midst of turmoil - Christians are not spared the heart aches and struggles of this world. However, God gives us his peace regardless of the storm that surrounds us.

Conviction to do the things of God - When you know Christ, you become consumed with living for him. The conviction of the Holy Spirit directs our paths.

Guidance through life's obstacles - The Lord is my shepherd. He guides those who know him. No longer do we plow through this world without direction. We live with purpose and protection.

A friend like no other - The Holy Spirit of God comforts us, it encourages us and it is our friend like no other.

Finding Christ changes everything about your life. **When we truly discover Christ, we desire to live for him, worship him, understand him, know him and sacrifice for him.** We desire to be with fellow believers who also love him.

John Piper writes about the kingdom of heaven; "It is the reign of God triumphing over everything that stands between you and everlasting life and joy. You will treasure it more than anything."

Illus: Does a sermon on tithing turn you off? Chances are you don't really know him. Do you have little desire to come to worship? You need to ask yourself if you really know Christ.

Jesus said *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* John 15:11

6. Salvation is free but it's costly

Illus: Alan Smith tells a story of two wealthy American Christians who traveled with a group that was going around the world. As they were visiting Korea, they saw by the side of the road, a field in which a boy was pulling a crude plow while an old man held the plow handles and guided it.

One man took a picture and made the comment that they must be very poor. The guide replied, "Yes, that is the family of Chi Noue. When the church was being built, they were eager to give something but they had no money. So they sold their only ox and gave the money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves.

The men were silent for several minutes and then one of them remarked, "That was a really big sacrifice for them." To which the guide replied, "They do not call it a sacrifice. They consider themselves fortunate that they had an ox to sell."

Knowing Christ means joyfully giving everything we have to his service. **The kingdom of heaven is worth infinitely more than the cost of discipleship.** Those who discover where the treasure lies will joyfully abandon everything else to secure it.

Salvation is free but it cost you the price of total commitment. Jesus said, **you give up your comfort and I will give you my kingdom.** Salvation is free but it will cost you everything.

Illus: I heard a true story about a woman who told a Pastor that she was reading the "Love Dare" book. When he asked how she was doing, she said, "I was halfway through the book when I came to a chapter that challenged me to surrender everything to Jesus. I've quit reading it because I'm not ready to give it all to Him."

That is what hinders many of you from truly experiencing the kingdom of heaven. You don't like the cost. You aren't willing to give your all for the treasure.

Conclusion

This parable is really summarized by two things; 1) What you need to give up (everything), and 2) what you will gain (everything).

Imagine that you are a customer looking for a valuable priceless pearl. You find it and you tell the vender, "I want that pearl. How much is it?"

The vendor says, "It's very expensive." You respond, "Well how much is it? Do you think I can afford it?"

The vendor replies, "Oh yes, you can afford it. In fact anyone can afford it." "But you said it is expensive." "Yes it is very expensive but anyone can afford it."

Exasperated, you respond, "Well how much is it?" The vendor replies, "How much money do you have in the bank?" Do you have a home? Do you have cars? Do you have a family? "

Finally you say, "If I give you everything I have, I will be all alone in the world." To which the vender replies, "Oh, it requires you also."

You see, when we come to know Christ, we give everything to him. We get to keep it but it is his to use anytime he desires.

It sounds expensive doesn't it?

It is expensive but the treasure is this; **"When we give Christ all we have, Christ gives us all he has."** He gives us the kingdom of heaven.

A true Christian is not someone who just has a casual interest in Christ; one who just has a philosophical knowledge of God.

A true Christian is a merchant who seeks and finds the treasure of salvation. In response, he joyfully gives everything to his Lord.

Dabbling won't get it. Commit to the Lord today.