

GOODLY PEARLS

Jesus used parables to compare the unfamiliar with the familiar, the spiritual with the common, and the heavenly with the earthly (cf. Mark 4:30). Matthew 13 records seven parables by which Jesus taught great truths about the kingdom of heaven, and in which He likened the kingdom to earthly things and events which His hearers could more easily understand. The sixth of these parables (Matthew 13:45-46) likens the kingdom to a “merchant man seeking goodly pearls: Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

SEEKING

The merchant man was a trader who sought beautiful pearls. Pearls are the product of oysters, and were (even more in old times) much desired for their beauty and rarity. Preferred size, color, shape, and texture would greatly increase their value. The merchant was already engaged in “seeking goodly pearls,” endeavoring to find those that were most desirable for his collection, or most advantageous to his prosperity. His interest was not in cheap, inferior seconds. As a merchant, he would have traveled near and far in his relentless search for the best pearls, and, no doubt, was constantly looking for that singular prized “pearl of great price.”

Like him, men should be eagerly seeking that which is of real value, and is of the greatest worth to them—salvation in Christ and His church (kingdom [Matthew 16:18-19]). As his diligent seeking brought the opportunity to gain something which made all his efforts worthwhile, so men must be ever vigilant in their search for what is really important, truly significant, and of eternal meaning. Thus, Jesus declared: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). The trader’s find was not accidental, but the expected consequence of vigorously searching for

that which he had set as his goal. Far too many pass through this brief life without finding that which is of true, genuine, indisputable value because they are not actively looking for it, or because they do not recognize the value when they find it. Too many find themselves depicted in Jesus’ warning: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6).

SELLING

For one pearl of great price, the merchant sold all he had. The price was not cheap. What he had was the accumulated wealth of all his earthly labors. Why would he think of selling the product of his life’s work? The pearl he found was the pearl for which he had hunted all his life, and nothing was of greater value, more prized, or to be held dearer—not even all he had. Thus, no sacrifice was too demanding, no cost too high, and no price too great if he could but obtain the object of his heart’s affection. Did he haggle over the price? Did he reluctantly deliver up his goods? Was the decision one over which he agonized, or tarried in making? Was he forced to trade? Or, did he make a mistake in undervaluing what he had, or in overvaluing what he wanted?

No. Such a transaction must not be looked upon as a loss of that sold, but the gain of that precious object obtained (cf. Matthew. 6:21). The trader did not hesitate to sell all he had. Knowing the worth of the kingdom, we must willingly, gladly, and without delay give up all (material possessions, pleasures, relationships, or prior religious affiliations) we have to obtain it.

When one is aware of the value, when his quest is enthusiastic, and when he understands he can be rich forever, all he has gathered in the past, regardless of its previous perceived worth to the owner, or of the efforts expended to gain it, is of no value when compared to the

solitary “pearl of great price,” the kingdom of heaven (Luke 9:23ff).

SECURING

Securing “the kingdom of heaven” should be of greatest importance, above all other things (Matthew 5:6). What else could be of greater value than that which means salvation to one’s soul, fellowship with God and His children, happiness and hope in this life, and, in the life to come, Heaven? Jesus’ purchase of the church with His precious blood clearly demonstrates its preeminent worth (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Yet, we must be wary of counterfeits, phonies, and cheap imitations which are of no value, but impoverish their owners (Matthew 15:9, 13; John 4:24; 7:17; 8:32). We must seek the true kingdom, be able to identify it, and give all to secure it.

The world zealously expends its time, efforts, and energy to gain the things that rust and decay, and from which they soon shall be separated (cf. Matthew 6:19ff; Proverbs 23:23). Wise men realize that which is of real value, not inferior, or just equal to the “things of the world,” but far surpassing them. It is not sufficient to “say” the spiritual treasures are of supreme value, if one acts like material possessions are more important, for nothing in this world is more valuable than salvation in Christ (Mat. 16:26). Thus, seeking is not enough, we must also secure, and even at the cost of selling all we have (Matthew 7:7).

Bobby Liddell *from Vigil*

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” **Matthew 16:25-26**

ANNIVERSARY

Cleo & Marion Stone, 02-19; 64th Congratulations!

BIRTHDAY

Julia Thrasher, 02-17.

ILL

Sunday: Steve Brown, Millie Robertson, Evan Pflugradt, Allen Scott, Tom Tucker.

Wednesday: Cindy Nelson, Millie Robertson.

Jamal Abyad is having complications with his illness.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, David Cole, Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Chris Edwards was in Chicago, IL on business during the week. Robin Brown was away on business during the week. The Carter family, Marcum family, Evan Pflugradt, and Linda Thomas are in Florida on vacation until later this week. John and Barbara James will be on an extended vacation in Arizona for several weeks.

ADDRESS CORRECTION

Please change your address information for Frances Thrasher to Apartment 126 (rather than 125).

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 47; Sunday PM, 34; Wednesday PM, 26.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 15:58

Those To Serve

February 17, 2008

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Parish

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Steve Brown
OPENING PRAYER Joel Nelson
PRESIDE..... John Dodson
ASSIST..... Chris Edwards
ASSIST..... Dave Parish
CLOSING PRAYER..... Trent Thrasher

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Jared Nelson
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek
LORD'S SUPPER..... John Dodson

WEDNESDAY 20th

SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
INVITATION Jeff Nemechek

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher
Phone: (913) 764-2325
E-mail: olathecoc@sbcglobal.net

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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