

WORTH IT ALL
Parable: Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price
Sermon 7
Matthew 13:44-46

I. ILLUSTRATION

1. WHAT IS REALLY VALUABLE TO YOU?

- o What would you save in a **fire**?
- o What is **irreplaceable**?
- o Where do you keep it—as **safe** deposit box?

2. RARE COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

- o **Baseball card—1909 Honus Wagner white border—sold 2016—\$3.12 million**
- o **Coin—1794 Liberty ‘flowing hair’ dollar—sold 2013—\$10 million**
- o **Car—1957 Ferrari 335s—sold 2016—\$34.4 million**

3. IN LIFE'S AUCTION—WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE THING

- o In every human soul is the **quest** for ultimate value!
- o What is the **price** of a human **soul**?

II. BACKGROUND

1. IN THIRD OF FIVE MAJOR DISCOURSES IN MATTHEW

- o **Mt 5-7**—Sermon on the Mount—two builders—rock and sand
- o **Mt 10**—Missionary Discourse
- o **Mt 13**—**Kingdom of Heaven**
- o **Mt 18**—The Church
- o **Mt 23-25**—End Times [Olivet Discourse]

2. BACK-STORY MATTHEW 13

- a. Jesus preached—Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand—**Mt 4**
- b. **Challenged** disciples—with **high cost** of following Him
 - **Mt 5**—a higher **ethic**—turn the other cheek—love your enemies
 - **Mt 8**—little **comfort**—foxes have holes, birds have nests, but the Son of Man . . .
 - **Mt 8**—before **family** duties—let the bury their own dead
 - **Mt 9**—resist pressure of **legalistic** religious rulers—eating with sinners—picking grain
 - **Mt 10**—threat of **beatings** and **prison, betrayal, and persecution**

- **Mt 10:37-8**—I come before family itself—*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.*
- c. Question—Why follow Him in this Kingdom? What is it like? Is it really **worth** it?
3. **MATTHEW 13**—PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
- a. First four parables—describe its **nature**, how it **grows**, and **who** will be in it
 - **Sower**—later explained only to disciples
 - **Wheat and Tares**—later explained only to disciples
 - **Mustard Seed**
 - **Leaven**
 - b. Next two parables
 - Spoken only to disciples
 - Describe how to **find** the kingdom—its **worth**—and how to **receive** it

Why give our lives for a kingdom we cannot see?
Can this truly be the answer to our quest for ultimate value?

II. BIBLICAL TEXT—Mt 13:44-46

Mt 13:44-46—*44 The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

III. OVERVIEW

A. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PARABLES

- 3 things—**Who finds** the ‘kingdom’—**how** it is **found**—**how** it will be **used**
- Treasure is **hidden**—pearl is ready to be discovered by the right eye
- Treasure is found by **surprise**—pearl is searched for
- Treasure is found by common **laborer**—pearl is found by trained expert
- Treasure **can be sold** for other useful things—pearl has such intrinsic value it will be kept

B. SIMILARITIES IN PARABLES

- 2 things—The **value** of the ‘kingdom’—and how to **receive** it
- Both are of inestimable **worth**
- Each requires **everything** from a person to obtain it

- Both bring great **joy**—implied in the pearl

C. AUDIENCE

- Jesus was talking only to His disciples when He told this parable
- But in earlier parables, He was addressing everybody

D. SCOPE—BOTH PARABLES ADDRESS TWO ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM

1. HEAVEN—ULTIMATE FUTURE VALUE—SALVATION

- The ‘kingdom’ is—living eternally with the Father
- The way is Jesus—by following Him
- Jesus is both the way and the goal—because He and the Father are One
- His own goal was—to return and be with the Father
- We get there—by following Him

2. PRESENT KINGDOM—INTERIM VALUE—HOW TO LIVE HEAR AND NOW

- This life is about seeking and discovering His kingdom
- Our relations with God now are most important—all other pursuits are trivial
- We are bringing our values into line with those of His eternal kingdom

IV. THE HIDDEN TREASURE

A. ILLUSTRATION

- **Hoxne Hoard—Suffolk, England**
- **Found by metal detectorist Eric Lawes—1992**
- **Searching for friend Peter Whatling’s lost hammer on his tenant farm**
- **4th century Roman silver/gold cache—worth over \$4 million**

B. BACK STORY

- People rarely used banks—**Temple of Artemis** a rare exception
- Buried treasure in ground to prevent discovery—sometimes lost and forgotten
- **Rabbinic proverb: *There is only one safe repository for money—the earth.***
- **Qumran Copper Scroll (3rd BC to 1st AD)—lists directions to caches of gold and silver**

C. THE SURPRISE DISCOVERY

1. Treasure is found **unexpectedly**—seemingly by accident
2. Not this is not accidental—but God’s **providential** care
3. **Example: Spurgeon’s conversion**
 - **Age 15—caught in blizzard on way to church—New Year’s Day 1850**

- o Diverted to Primitive Methodist Church—Artillery Street, Newtown, Colchester
- o Layman substitute preacher—kept repeated text—with no comment
 - Is 45:22—*Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth*
- o Spoke directly to Spurgeon and challenged him directly with the text
- o Immediately—Spurgeon was converted
- o Not by accident—but providence—the Kingdom found him

4. God is constantly moving us towards discovery—even when we are not looking for Him

D. EVERYDAY WORK

1. We find God in the ordinary places of life
2. We can also *produce* great treasure—with God’s help—in our daily tasks
3. **Example: J.S. Bach**
 - o Taught many years at St. Thomas School/Church, Leipzig
 - o Trained boys’ choir, played services, weddings, funerals
 - o Composed weekly Sunday works—mostly unpublished in his lifetime
 - o 289 cantatas, 263 chorales, 24 concertos, 4 overtures, 365 organ works, 162 piano

E. THE CRUCIAL MOMENT

1. Our ‘digger’ seized the moment when it came
2. **Example: Shakespeare—*Julius Caesar***
 - Act 4, Scene 4—*There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries.*
3. We must **seize** the great moments when they come—even unexpectedly
4. We must recognize them as ‘**authentic**’—genuinely of God—and of true value
5. When they are—we must be **prepared to yield everything** in order to seize the opportunity

F. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES—TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE PRIZE

- **Nathaniel**—Jn 1—*Rabbi, You are the Son of God, the King of Israel*
- **Samaritans**—Jn 3—*we have heard for ourselves and know this is the Savior of the world*
- **Man born blind**—Jn 9—*one thing I do know, that though I was blind now I see . . .*
- **Paul**—Acts 9—on the road to Damascus

Ph 3:7-8—*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.*

V. THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

A. ILLUSTRATION—LA PEREGRINA PEARL

- 51 carats—pear shaped—over 500 years old—found by a slave in Panama Gulf
- First owned by Queen Mary I of England
- Spanish queens—250 years—then Napoleon’s descendants
- Duke Abercorn of England—100 years
- Elizabeth Taylor—given by husband Richard Burton 1969
- Sold 2011—\$11 million

B. BACK STORY

1. Pearls were the most valuable jewel/metal in the ancient world
2. Mainly from Persian Gulf, India, Red Sea and Britain
3. **Cleopatra** had the two largest—10 million sesterces—about 8000 years laborer’s wages
4. **Caesar** gave Brutus’s mother one—worth 6 million sesterces

C. THE PEARL IS ACQUIRED BY SEEKERS

1. Found by diligent search of one who knows what he desires
2. Biblical examples
 - o **Nicodemus**—came to Jesus at night—**Jn 3**
 - o **Cleopas and companion**—*were not our hearts burning within us*—**Lk 24**
 - o **Ethiopian eunuch**—reading scroll of Isaiah—**Acts 8**
 - o **Cornelius**—sincere seeker who—*prayed to God continually*—**Acts 10**
 - o **Bereans**—searched the Scriptures diligently—**Acts 17**
3. Historical examples
 - o **Justin Martyr**—2nd century—searched endlessly through philosophy
 - o **Martin Luther**—tireless search for holiness and right relation to God

D. PEARL IS OF UNIQUE AND INTRINSIC VALUE

1. The merchant **cherishes** it—intends to keep it—not to sell and make a profit
2. Amplifies importance of our **intimate** relationship with God
 - o Times when the Lord reveals something just for you and nobody else
 - o **For example—Mary**—*treasured all these things in her heart*—**Lk 2**
3. On-going quest
 - o We continue discovering new treasures—truths about the kingdom and God’s will for us

E. THE NECESSARY SACRIFICE

1. This is **not ascetic self-denial**—to earn the kingdom
2. Instead—we **value it more** than anything else we have
3. We let no lesser treasure—prevent us from **putting Him and His kingdom first**
4. Not a hurtful and grudging sacrifice—but a **privilege and joy**
5. To get the very best—the merchant **gave up second best**
6. For the highest and **eternal ‘good’**—we sacrifice subordinate and **worldly ‘goods’**

He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he can never lose—J. Elliott

VII. APPLICATION

1. EVALUATE OUR VALUES

- o What is most **important**—What is **authentic**—What is of true and lasting **worth**?
- o Is there something of such value—we are prepared to lose all else to gain it?

2. THE MOST IMPORTANT AND AUTHENTIC THING IS ETERNAL LIFE

- o The **lesser** treasure is this life—the **greater** treasure is eternal life
- o To **gain** eternal life—we must **lose** this life—to Christ

Mk 8:35-36—Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good is it for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? And what can a man give in exchange his soul?

- o And *this* is **eternal life**—the **secret of the Kingdom** of God—is **being with the Father**

Jn 17:3—This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

3. THE KINGDOM IS OF INESTIMABLE VALUE

- a. Jesus Himself proved this by His example
 - He yearned to **return home** to the Father
 - He endured the shame of the cross for that joy set before Him—**Heb 12:2**
- b. The kingdom is **priceless**—because He **paid** the price of admission for us

*Jesus paid it all—all to Him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow*

- c. The Kingdom is not just a place
 - It is being present with Him
 - **Jesus is the pearl of great price**

4. EVERYTHING ELSE TAKES SECOND PLACE

- a. The Rich Young Ruler was unwilling to do this

Mk 10:21—*go sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, follow Me*

- Jesus meant—“You must be sold out for Me!
- But the man—*went away sad—because he had great wealth*

- b. Peter understood and obeyed—*We have left everything to follow you!*

5. THE RISK OF TRUST AND RECKLESSNESS OF ADVENTURE

- a. A supreme moment of risk—for the digger and the merchant

- When they stood empty handed—without their prize in hand!

- b. The opposite of the ‘prosperity gospel’

- Willingness to forfeit comfort, safety, security—and put our life on the line

- c. **Example**

1. **1907 London Newspaper Advertisement**

“Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”

2. **Result—thousands applied!**

- No one knew it was an expedition to Antarctica.
- Led by Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton
- But they were willing to risk it all
- For the sake of adventure
- For uncertain hope of honor and fame.

- d. **Application**

- Today people want to be challenged.
- They want to escape mediocrity.
- They want their lives to count for something.
- They might even be willing to risk it all.
- But only if the challenge is **worth it all**.
- **People are most willing to live for something when it is worth dying for**

6. THE IRONY OF THE TREASURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- a. The kingdom has a cost—but it is priceless—you cannot put a value on it

- Christ gave himself—the ultimate cost—to give us what is priceless

b. Though it is priceless—it is free

Is 55:1—*Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, but and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

c. While it is free—it is not without cost

- Jesus tells us to **count the cost**—and follow Him
- He wants all of us—we must become **‘sold out’**

VIII. INVITATION

GOD OF THE FERTILE FIELDS

God of the fertile fields,
Lord of the earth that yields our daily bread;
forth from thy bounteous hand
come gifts thy love has planned,
that all in every land be clothed and fed.

We would thy stewards be,
holding in trust from thee all thou dost give;
help us in love to share,
teach us like you to care,
that earth may all be fair; your children live.

**As grows the hidden seed
to fruit that serves our need, thy kingdom grows.
So let our toil be used,
no gift of thine abused,
no humble task refused thy love bestows.**

God of the countryside,
dear to our Lord, who died to make us one;
we pledge our lives to thee
to serve thee faithfully
till in eternity our day is done.