

THE PEARL AND THE PRICE

Matthew 13:44-46

'These two parables have identical meanings. Both picture salvation as something hidden from most people, but so valuable that people who have it revealed to them are willing to give up all they have to possess it'. (Dr John MacArthur)

The contrast between the two seems to be that the treasure was 'found' -the man was not seeking it. However in v45 the merchant is actually doing the 'seeking'. What does this tell us about the different ways we become Christians?

You might like to share a few testimonies- remembering in all Luke 19:10.

You could also compare Saul not seeking to be saved- with Cornelius or the Ethiopian Eunuch.

What can move us into a deeper, more consistent, walk with God? What turns half-hearted believers into whole hearted followers of Jesus? These questions you might like to keep in mind as you study what Jesus says here. The parables are not long, but they are loaded with life-changing truth.

THE PEARL AND THE TREASURE

Treasure - Burying your valuables in the ground may sound strange to us. Today we usually put our money in a bank/building society.. We keep our valuables in a safe deposit box. Back in those days, there were no banks for the common people. What the people of the first century did, as they did not have mattresses either, they buried it. This was especially true in Palestine because it was a place of frequent warfare. Burying their valuables protected them against any enemies who might raid their homes and try to steal everything.

Pearl - *-why did Jesus not say some precious stone, like a diamond?*

The pearl is an especially appropriate figure for the kingdom because it is the only gem that cannot be improved by people. All other jewels have to be cut and polished by skilled craftsmen before they have value as gemstones. But a pearl is perfect when it is found and it cannot be improved by cutting and polishing. In fact, one cut from a human hand and a pearl is worthless.

In what ways do the treasure and the pearl speak about the kingdom and also about the King?

THE PRICE

How would you answer someone who from these parables would say 'I can purchase (or earn) my way into the Kingdom? (note Ephesians 2:8-9)

The value - Both of these men were convinced that they had found something of extreme value.

How is the value of the kingdom emphasized in these two very short parables?

Consider – what do we put most value on? For example – friends and their advice, money, property, car, work promotion or acclaim by others (or what else)??

Compare how Paul valued this himself -Philippians 3:7-8

Have you recognized the great worth of Jesus? Do we really understand the treasure He is?

Every one of us deserves to go to hell. Do you understand that? Do you believe that about yourself?

Jesus rescues us. In Christ we get forgiveness. We get heaven. In Christ we get adopted into God's family. Because of Jesus, God Himself becomes our Father. Through faith we become His children. What is all that worth?

The response -How does the value of what has been found change these people's actions?

Tyndale - *'prudent calculation gives way to extravagant action'*

Some have said it was a great sacrifice -to sell all. This man (v44) doesn't just sell everything he has, but he does so with joy. He was honest -he could have walked off with the treasure.

How is it possible for someone to give up everything they possess with laughter and joy?

How does devotion to Jesus grow? When does giving all become a joy?

Without doubt, it begins with our discovery of Christ, Who He is and what He has done. But mere discovery is never enough. We must recognize his worth. Only when we see that the value of Jesus far exceeds the value of anything we have on earth will we give it all so we can possess Him. Those who recognize the value of Jesus joyfully surrender all to Him.

Cf: Matthew 16:24-26 and Luke 14:25-28

Conclude by reading Psalm 16:11

DJ

PRAYER POINTS:

Pray that God would give us a real appreciation of the value of being in the kingdom.

Pray too for grace to value Jesus above everyone and every thing else.

General Church Meeting – Thursday 19th November