

# The Value of the Kingdom

*Matthew 13:44-46*

## INTRODUCTION

“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. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:44-46)

Here we have the next two parables in Matthew 13. Jesus offers no interpretation for them. I think that is for two reasons. First, these smaller parables contain their own explanation. And second, His explanation of the two larger parables provides a framework for understanding the smaller ones.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLES

I see five elements to these two parables.

**DISCOVERY.** A man seems to stumble across a treasure hidden in a field. A merchant looking for fine pearls finds one of extraordinary worth. Both make a discovery that they weren't expecting.

**RECOGNITION.** Both recognize the value of what they find.

Other fields are just fields. Some are better; some are worse.

But THIS field is of extraordinary value because of the remarkable treasure it contains.

There are many fine pearls. When you find one fine pearl, surely there's a finer one to be found.

But THIS pearl is of exceptional value, never to be exceeded.

**DETERMINATION.** Each man decides he must have the precious thing he has discovered. His heart and mind become singularly focused on his discovery, and he must have it for his own.

**SACRIFICE.** Each is willing to give up everything he possesses to acquire the precious thing he has discovered. Others might even accuse them of being out of their minds; why would someone sacrifice everything for the sake of a single thing?

**ACQUISITION.** Each man acquires what he longed to have.

**THE PARABLE IS NOT ABOUT TREASURE OR PEARLS.**

Of course, the parable is not about treasure or pearls; it's about the

Kingdom of God. So let's think about these five elements in terms of the Kingdom.

## **FIVE ELEMENTS TO THE PARABLES**

### **DISCOVERY.**

Some seem to stumble across the Gospel when they aren't looking for it; that's my story.

Others are looking for something and are never satisfied. They might find many "fine pearls," but then they discover that there is another, better pearl. That was the experience of C.S. Lewis. He investigated all kinds of beliefs and theories, dismissing them each in turn. But then the Holy Spirit opened his heart to believe the Gospel, and he believed.

### **RECOGNITION.**

Those who come to Jesus Christ find themselves suddenly aware of the value of Christ and the Gospel. The Spirit of God opens our eyes. The same words that leave others cold, confused, or angry bring us longing, hope, and awareness.

### **DETERMINATION.**

Those who have their eyes opened to the glory and beauty of Christ long for Him; their hearts and minds are set on Him. In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan writes that Pilgrim heard of hope in Christ and was pointed to the Gospel. He ran toward the Gospel with all his might. His wife and children saw him running, and they called him back to them. He put his fingers in his ears and kept running, crying out, "Life! Life! Eternal life!" It's not that the earth disappears, but the Kingdom of God becomes large in our vision, and we are determined to be there.

## **SACRIFICE.**

Those who are granted faith in Jesus Christ give up much. Paul talks about this in *Philippians 3:7-11*; as I read these words notice the constant emphasis on Jesus Christ, not things or experiences.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of **Christ**. More than that, I count all things to be loss because 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** and be found in **Him**, not having a righteousness of my own which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in **Christ**, the righteousness which is from God upon faith, that I may know **Him** and the power of **His** resurrection and the fellowship of **His** sufferings, being conformed to **His** death, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead [**His** life]. (*Philippians 3:7-11*)

When you know Jesus Christ, everything else pales in comparison. The things we once valued so highly become unnecessary, disposable, even worthless. We are genuinely willing to follow Him anywhere He leads us.

By the way, His leading always comes with His Spirit's help, so that even when following is hard, it is the very thing we long to do.

Let me be very clear about something. Sacrificing everything for the sake of Christ does not mean that we first sacrifice, and then He saves as a reward. Salvation and new birth come first, given freely to us by God by His grace. One proof of our new life is a change of heart and mind about the value of other things.

### **ACQUISITION.**

The man in the field found his heart and mind captivated by the treasure before he acquired the treasure. The merchant found his heart and mind captured by the priceless pearl before acquiring it. Likewise, Jesus acquires us before we acquire Him.

For you were **bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body. (First Corinthians 6:20)

I am not my own; Jesus bought me with a price – His own death on the cross – long before I gained Him.

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that **for which** also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12)

Jesus laid hold of me in eternity past, so I laid hold of Him when the

Spirit gave me life and faith.

Christ acquires us before we acquire Him.

## WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

So, what is the Kingdom of God? How are we to understand it?

Well, it's not a place defined by geography, language, or economics. Neither is it a place defined by a language or culture.

The reign of Jesus Christ defines the Kingdom of God, which ultimately is Jesus Himself.

We love counterfeits. We love to define our own treasures and culture our own pearls and pretend they have value. That value is always a subjective thing. Amazon is currently selling more than 40,000 books on how to have peace? Why so many? Because none of them actually work. Some people go from book to book, from fad to fad, trying to find something that will satisfy them, but always end up disappointed.

The value of the Kingdom of God is not subjective. It is valuable because the God-who-is has created and defined it. In the end, the Kingdom of God is Jesus Himself. He is the true treasure. He is the priceless pearl. If we have Him, we have the Kingdom. If we don't have

Him, we don't have the Kingdom, even if we possess the entire world.

Several dozen times, the New Testament uses the words "in Christ" to describe the blessings God gives His people. These blessings are only available in Christ; you have to be a Christian to have them. And these blessings are guaranteed in Christ; they are not simply available to Christians if they want them; they belong to us because they come to us in Christ.

What do we have in Christ?

- Redemption (Romans 3:24)
- New birth (Romans 6:11)
- Eternal life (Romans 6:23)
- Freedom from God's condemnation (Romans 8:1)
- Freedom from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
- God's unchanging love (Romans 8:39)
- Unity with other believers (Romans 12:5)
- Sanctification (First Corinthians 1:2)
- The grace of God (First Corinthians 1:4)
- Understanding of the Gospel (Second Corinthians 3:14)
- A new nature (Second Corinthians 5:17)
- Reconciliation with God (Second Corinthians 5:19)
- Liberty from slavery to sin and death (Galatians 2:4)
- Adoptions as God's sons (Galatians 3:26)

- We are raised with Christ and seated with Him now (Ephesians 2:6)
- We are the workmanship of God, created for good works (Ephesians 2:10)
- Intimate fellowship with God (Ephesians 2:13)
- Forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32)
- Encouragement (Philippians 2:1)
- The consolation of God's love (Philippians 2:1)
- Fellowship with the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:1)
- Compassion (Philippians 2:1)
- God is calling us ever upwards (Philippians 3:14)
- The perfect peace of God which guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7)
- Ongoing growth into perfect Christlikeness (Colossians 1:28)
- Faith (First Timothy 1:14)
- Love (First Timothy 1:14)
- Salvation (Second Timothy 3:15)
- The certainty of eternal glory (First Peter 5:10)

and

- Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3)

That last one, "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," means that in Christ, there is everything God gives His people, more than we could ever imagine.

**JESUS IS WORTH EVERYTHING**

So, what is Jesus' worth? He is worth everything. In Matthew 19 we read a conversation between Peter and Jesus:

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive one hundred times as much, and will inherit eternal life. (Matthew 19:27-29)

Jesus doesn't mean that if you leave a farm, you'll get another farm. He means that what God gives is far more valuable than anything we give up for the sake of Christ. After all, we gain Jesus Himself, and we inherit everything He has received from the Father! God is not a debtor to anyone; no one has first given to God so that God owes it back (Romans 11:35).

He who indeed did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

## **BRINGING IT HOME**

### **PERSONALIZATION.**

What is it you need from God? Forgiveness? Peace? Contentment? Purpose? It's all in Christ. Healing? It's in Christ. Joy? It's in Christ.

Fellowship with God? It's in Christ.

This is a lesson we need to learn. All things are given to us in Christ. If God wants you to have it, it's in Christ. And since God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ," we can be sure that He has far more for us than we can possibly imagine.

I find tremendous comfort in this truth. I don't need to pursue forgiveness; I need to hold to Jesus Christ. I don't need to pursue comfort; I need to hold to Jesus Christ. I don't need to pursue meaning; I need to hold to Jesus Christ.

It's all mine in Him.

### **APPROPRIATION.**

Where is your faith today?

Jesus doesn't make these things available; He gives them to you. They aren't your if you can figure out how to ask for them; they are yours in Christ. Give thanks for them! Ask for eyes to see what the Father has given you. Ask for faith to trust that He will continue to meet your needs. It seems to me that mature faith is not saying "help me, help me, help me," but "thank you, thank you, thank you!"

