

but only so much gain. What did Paul say in Philippians 3:8? *"I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ."* You see the reality is for all who come to Jesus and trust and obey Him, the wonders of His love and grace and mercy and the treasures of salvation found with Him just can't be exaggerated!

Do you know these things too? Or are the gospel truths of rebirth and conversion and salvation through Christ and His Spirit and Word abiding in you only more vague and empty nothings for you, and you wonder what all the enthusiasm is about and needs to be about? But doesn't that mean then you don't yet know the Saviour and you have not yet received Him in your heart and life? Are you still unsaved? Oh, hear the gospel message of these two parables and this sermon about owning the inestimable worth of the Gospel! Hear and your soul shall live! One preacher put it this way, "There is glory for the individual in Jesus Christ, surpassing all else that the best of this life can offer. Let us not rest till we too are like the treasure-finder and the exultant pearl-seeker, and for joy thereof, are ready to part with all that we have."

Do you take these two parables and its gospel truths most seriously? Owning the inestimable worth of the Gospel and kingdom of heaven - is that what you and I are about? Do your pursuits and priorities of each day reflect this too? And if having received this treasure above all treasures, are we living so that others might come to hear and know of it and receive it as well? We live in a world of darkness with so much false advertising leading people only more and more into treasures that dismay and decay. But Jesus gives a gospel message that is absolutely true and inexpressibly rich and endlessly, even increasingly, satisfying! All who turn from sin and wholly trust in the Lord and seek daily to live in humble repentance and devotion before Him find this out.

Owning the inestimable worth of the gospel and kingdom of heaven....Jesus teaches here nothing is as needful and urgent and wonderful. Don't live and die without knowing it and showing it. Amen.

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October 16, 2005

Publication No.228

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



ADVERTISING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN [2]

This broadcast is a continuation of last week's message, both dealing with two short parables of Jesus as found in Matthew 13:44-46. *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man has found, he hides [it], and for the joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly [beautiful and precious] pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."* Only Matthew records for us these two parables, the one about the treasure found in the field and the other about this pearl of great price that was found. These parables are about not only the riches of the gospel, but realizing this for yourself. We are looking at how these parables teach the supreme worth of the gospel treasure, the openness of that treasure to all, and the sure sign of receiving and keeping this treasure. Last time we dealt with the first point about how these parables tell so clearly the supreme worth of the gospel and being a believing partaker of it, by grace through faith in Christ, the Saviour.

The Lord would have His disciples realize the supreme riches of His kingdom and gospel that they also, from an overflowing heart, might go out and tell others about Jesus and the kingdom of heaven message that He came to bring us. Notice now with me how those riches are open to all. The gospel of the kingdom of God and its inestimable riches is to be proclaimed and offered to all. This comes out in looking at these two parables and noticing especially also the differences between them.

In the first parable we are told about this man going about his daily life, or daily work even, who stumbles across this treasure in a field. He was not looking for a treasure especially but suddenly came across it and desired it by all means. Then, in the other parable, you have the merchant man whose business it was to seek for precious pearls, and while searching, he found the pearl of great price. In the first parable you have an example of the prophet's words, "I am found of them that sought me not" and in the second parable with the merchant you have an example of the promise, "seek and you shall find!" And can we not say in the whole history of the Christian church you have an abundance of cases of both kinds. The woman of Samaria who went to the well on her daily errand and there met with Christ one day rather suddenly and unexpectedly found Him, whereas

Nicodemus who met with Jesus by night, had found Him only after seeking for Him awhile. Zaccheus found Jesus rather suddenly and dramatically, while the Ethiopian treasurer found Him only after searching and studying His Word and having Philip open his understanding concerning it.

The issue now is, and these twin parables surely make this point too, the gospel message should be proclaimed to all and God will take care that the seekers shall find, and that even those not seeking will find the treasure above all treasures. How encouraging these parables may and should be to all who seek, and how inviting these parables should be to all to come under the Word once and again and again, for who knows how one may be eternally blessed in doing so. Have you been seeking for the pearl of great price for many years? Do you hear and see that you find it all in and with the Savior, Jesus Christ, and trusting and following Him in accordance with His Word? With the gospel of Jesus Christ we have everything and so much more than we need for our complete and eternal salvation with God.

On the other hand, maybe you are one who doesn't regularly listen to God's Word and just now you are listening unexpectedly even. Perhaps you are listening now with no definite purpose, but just to pass some time or just to check out different stations. Maybe you are listening along only because someone else asked you to do so, or maybe you are staying tuned simply out of curiosity, and the last thing you are thinking of is your salvation and this treasure above all treasures. And yet, as you keep listening, you are gripped with what is said now, and you realize you are missing something big-time, and your life is foolishly obsessed with and revolving around all secondary matters, and the one thing needful you don't have in order...and God even now is awakening you and stirring you, convicting you of your sins and carelessness in life and your need to get right with God. You have this cry in your heart "God be merciful to me, a sinner" and you see something of the riches of Christ the Saviour and belonging to Him and being saved by Him and following after Him, and God's Spirit, even through this very word, works the miracle of regeneration in your heart and life even this hour, so that you cannot go on anymore in your sinful and indifferent ways, but you must follow the gospel call, and there is nothing more you would rather do! Are there seekers listening who have become finders and are there non seekers listening who suddenly may have their eyes and hearts opened under the preaching by the Spirit of the living God?

The whole message of the Bible is that all are called to seek the Lord, and diligently to search for the treasure of the gospel found in and with Him. The added marvelous message of these two parables is that while the Lord will surely bless the seeker who looks for Him through His Word, the Lord may also in His good pleasure suddenly save a person who is just going about his daily life without a thought hardly about the state of his soul and the great need of the Saviour, and give a saving interest in the treasures of

the gospel that we find in and with Him. The Word by the Holy Spirit is an almighty instrument that God uses and blesses according to His good pleasure.

Here, with a prayer for the Holy Spirit's blessing, let me just sound and proclaim one gospel call from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. As I proclaim this word and call from the Bible in the name of the Lord, who knows how He may bless it to someone now or even later on. Hear the Word of the Lord from Isaiah 55:1-3, "*Ho everyone who thirst, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live!*" And hear this gospel call from Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30, "*Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*"

How do we know when the Word is truly blessed? That brings us to our third point, where we see yet the sure sign of truly receiving the treasure of the gospel. What is the sure sign according to both parables? Then you are willing to give up all and nothing can be as important to you nor as precious to you as having the gospel treasure in your own heart and life. The buying of the field for the treasure in it, and the purchase of the pearl of great price, and being willing to sell all else to obtain that field and pearl simply signify this, that when truly saved, then nothing counts and matters so much as being saved and staying saved, having Christ as your Saviour and Lord becomes your top priority in life and death in all you are about. As one person put it, "We make Christ our own by believing in Him, and giving up everything that is inconsistent with our possession of Him. Both parables emphasize being saved means not knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally in turning from sin and trusting Him and surrendering your all to Him."

What Jesus emphasizes in these twin parables too is that this was no burden for either the man who found the treasure or the merchant who found the pearl of great price. Neither thought they had to give up too much to obtain their treasure, but both thought their treasure was worth everything else they would give up for it. There was joy in giving up all else and selling all they had for the joy of the splendour of what they were receiving. The worldly and unsaved person can't understand how the Christian will give up all for Jesus because they see it in terms of a loss, but the person who once has seen the gospel treasure that may be ours in and through Christ Jesus, by grace alone and through faith alone in Him, don't see it as any loss at all,