

The Pearl of Great Price
Matthew 13:45-52
July 26, 2020

The Text for my message is the the parable of the Pearl of Great price. Jesus said: “ **The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

The way that much of Christendom has understood this parable, is that Jesus is the pearl of great price. And we Christians are like the merchants. When we find Jesus in the marketplace of ideas we instantly recognize how valuable he is, and give up everything in order to purchase him and make him our own. It has been preached in this way to spur on discipleship and lead people to be more diligent in the faith.

But there’s some problems with this interpretation... In all of my reading of the bible I have learned that We don’t find Jesus the shepherd, but Jesus the shepherd finds us. We do not buy him in the open market. He bought us, out of the bondage of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus once said to his disciple in John 15:16, “**You did not choose me, I chose you**” Even today’s Old Testament lesson emphasizes this “**The Lord God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession.**” (Deut. 7:6)

So to be faithful to the rest of scripture, and to everything that God has said about how a person is saved, this parable needs to be interpreted differently I think. We are **NOT** the merchants, and Jesus is **NOT** the pearl of Great Price. It’s actually the other way around. **Jesus is the Merchant** who sells everything he has in order to purchase the pearl. And **we are that pearl.**

Again Deuteronomy 7:6 “**The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession.**” God thinks of his people as his treasure. The pearl in the story is a treasure... and

the companion parable which is really the same story speaks of treasure in a field. The Pearl of Great price is YOU, and Jesus sacrificed everything in order to acquire you!

The apostle Paul says “you were bought with a price.” (1 Cor. 6:20) Jesus says “The son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matt. 20:28) All the company of heaven greet the returning Jesus with the song “worthy are you who were slain, by your blood you have **ransomed** a people for God.” (Rev 5:9) Whenever the bible speaks of cost and sacrifice and ransom and payment it is always always always pointing to Jesus giving all that he had to redeem or buy you for himself. You are the Pearl, for whom Jesus sold all that had to make his own.

All that he had, he gave it up. When He came down from heaven and was incarnated as a man, he gave up his rights as God. He would not use his divine powers to help himself or save himself. He left his **throne** in heaven where the never ending song of angels is heard, so that he might instead born in a **barn** to a mother who was of humble circumstance.s. He gave up his **authority** as God and became **obedient** to his imperfect human parents. He who gives **rain** to the earth would become **thirsty**; He who is **Joy** itself would become **sorrowful** to the point of death; He who gives **rest** to those who weary and heavy laden, would have **no place to lay his head**. He allowed himself to be arrested, beaten, and whipped and spat upon, cursed, and crucified. As he hung there naked on the cross he gave away even his personal dignity. **He emptied himself.**

Hebrews describes the moment in this way: “For the joy set before him endured the cross and its shame.” (Heb. 12:2) He did it for the joy set before him. What is the joy set before him? It was the the thought of you being saved for all eternity. You are the pearl for which he would

give away everything. You are treasure found in a field that caused the man to joyfully sell all that he has to buy it.

This parable is really not all that difficult to understand. It's just Jesus mission to earth laid out in a nice little story about a man giving up everything to buy a pearl. It's another way of saying "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son."

You may find it hard to think of yourself as a valuable pearl... because you know who you are and what you did. You regard yourself in your sins. But God can see past that because he remembers. He remembers what you were meant to be. He's never forgotten and he seeks to restore.

Can a person take it in the other way, where Jesus is the pearl? As Our response. I think we can. We should consider Jesus to be our treasure. We should be willing to make sacrifices in the choices that we make in life. . However, we must be very careful not to make our sacrifices into the cause of our salvation. If we start thinking that, we go down the rabbit hole of thinking we have somehow fulfilled the law and that we we could never do.

John the apostle gives us guidance in his first epistle (1John 4:9) He says "We love because he first loved us." Therefore we sacrifice for him because he first sacrificed for us us. We give because we have been given to.

As it turns out, the kingdom of heaven is about sacrifice, We are the pearl for whom Christ sacrificed all that he was. And HE is certainly our pearl to whom we dedicate our lives in response. AMEN