

Teaching Sound Doctrine Lessons on Clearing The Confusion

Lord Teach Us

Parables Of The Treasure In The Field And The Pearl Of Great Price

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the ,which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matt. 13:44-46).

Jesus often taught using parables, a parable is defined by Thayer as follows:

παραβολή

parabolē

Thayer Definition:

1) a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition, as of ships in battle

2) metaphorically

2a) a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude

2b) an example by which a doctrine or precept is illustrated

2c) a narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom are figuratively portrayed

2d) a **parable**: an earthly story with a heavenly meaning

Jesus taught these two parables to emphasize how men should treasure and value the kingdom of heaven. "The whole point of the parable is the joy with which the man finds the treasure, and his abandonment of everything else in order to secure it. There are several lessons in this parable which deserve our careful study.

The Gospel Is A Treasure

We can see in both parables, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of heaven are presented as a treasure or a pearl of great price. The riches of earth, the pleasures of life, and the praise of fellow men are not worthy to be compared with the blessings which God has prepared for man in the gospel. Many who have attained the riches of this earth, personal fame, and political power manifest a dissatisfaction down deep in their soul. The rainbows after which many chase cannot satisfy their deepest longings.

In contrast to all the man made treasures that most folks are seeking, our Lord has provided a treasure beyond compare for us in the gospel. The treasure was expensive from the point of view of the cost to provide it. God the Father had to give up His dear Son to suffer the agonies of death on Calvary. Christ shed His precious blood in order that mankind could be redeemed from sin. As one considers this high price of the gospel, they should be truly impressed that it is a treasure a true gift from God.

The gospel is a treasure when considered on the basis of what it does for its recipient. The gospel of Jesus Christ provides forgiveness of sin for mankind, a peace which passes all understanding, *Php_4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* This treasure the guide to right living which provides for personal happiness now and eternal life when we die. The realization that there is purpose in life, the means of obtaining inner peace with one's self, the hope for a bright tomorrow, the hope for justice to triumph, and other such human ideals can only find attainment through what God has provided for us in the gospel. Indeed, the gospel of Jesus Christ is a treasure, a pearl of great price.

The Discovery Of The Treasure And Pearl

The two parables have many points of similarity; however, they also have a significant difference with reference to how the two men found their respective treasures. The one man accidentally stumbled upon his treasure; the other man found the pearl after a long, arduous search for it. We need to consider the significance of each of these men.

1. The One Found The Treasure. The parable relates that a certain man found a treasure in a field. We do not know what he was doing in the field, whether plowing it for someone else, passing through it, or something else; that is unimportant. The point is that he accidentally discovered a treasure, recognized its value, and did everything necessary in order to obtain it.

There are men who find the Kingdom of heaven just as the man found the treasure in the field. They accidentally stumble onto the gospel. The woman at the well in John 4 did not go in search of eternal life; she stumbled onto it *Joh 4:6-15 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

The Philippian jailor is another example he was not looking for the gospel of Jesus Christ on the night when the earthquake freed his prisoners. Read (Acts 16:26-34). There are many others who accidentally find the gospel. Some meet a friend who tells them about Jesus while on the job, some tune in a radio program, some pick up a tract, or otherwise happen to come in contact with the gospel of Jesus Christ without looking for it.

2. The One Who Found The Pearl. The man who found the pearl of great price was different from the man who found the treasure in that he was pursuing pearls. He found his pearl of great price at the end of a diligent search for valuable pearls. There are men who find the gospel in this manner as well. Lydia learned the gospel while assembled by the banks of a river in the worship of God (Acts 16:14-15) *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have*

judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us..

Cornelius was taught the gospel after diligently pursuing prayer, good works, and other acts of devotion to the Lord (Acts 10:1-2). The Bereans sought and searched diligently to be sure that the things which they were taught were so (Acts 17:11). These men were searching for the truth and recognized it when they found it.

There are people like that who find the gospel today. Some of them have wandered in and out of several denominations. Some of them put us to shame in the good deeds which they have done. In their searching for the truth, they come into contact with the gospel of Jesus Christ, recognize it for what it is, and give up everything necessary in order to obtain it.

The Effort To Obtain The Treasure And The Pearl

The parables are similar in demonstrating the effort which each man made to obtain his respective treasure. The two men in these parables are alike in two respects: they know a very valuable thing when they see it, and they are willing to pay the highest price in order to secure it. The attitude of both men was to make the discovered treasure their own at whatever price it cost them. Each sold all that he had in order to obtain his treasure. The man who discovered the treasure was beside himself with joy at having found the treasure. Neither man be-grudged what he had to give up to obtain his treasure. Each man thought that his treasure was worth more than the things which he gave up to obtain it.

In order to obtain the treasure or the pearl of great price, men have had to be willing to pay the price. Moses gave up all of the riches, political power, and fame of Egypt in order to be identified with the Christ (*Heb. 11:24-25*) *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*. Paul had to give up his position in the Jewish religion in order to become a Christian (Phil. 3:4-11). The rich young ruler was called upon to sell all that he had and give it to the poor in order to be Christ's disciple (Matt. 19:16-22). Some men have had to sacrifice their families in order to be faithful to Jesus (Lk. 14:26). Other men have had to sacrifice life itself for Christ (Acts 7:54-8: 1; Acts 12:1-3; Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:6-8). Yet, these men gave their lives joyfully because they valued the kingdom of heaven as being of more value than life itself.

"We are inclined to say that a person who discovers treasure anywhere or in any form and then walks away from it is a fool. But many do that with the gospel"

What we commonly find is that the kingdom of heaven is not so esteemed. We see men hesitating to part with anything for it, looking at it as a sad alternative, as a resort to which they must perhaps betake themselves when too old to enjoy life any longer, as what they have to come to when all the real joy and intensity of life are gone, but, not as that on which life itself can be spent. Entrance into the kingdom of heaven is looked upon much as entrance into the fortified town is viewed by the rural population. It may be necessary in time of danger, but they will think with longing of the fields and homesteads they must abandon; it is by constraint, not from love, that they make the change. In short, it is plain that men generally do not reckon the kingdom of heaven to be of such value that they sacrifice everything else for its sake

The fact remains that, in the minds of most people, the gospel is not worth nearly so much as the treasures of this life. Consequently, when they come into contact with the gospel, they have to be exhorted and beseeched to make them give up anything to obey the gospel. Churches are filled with "Christians" who are unwilling to weather three drops of rain to attend worship services, who would think nothing of missing an evening worship service to watch a ball game or attend a game, who never find time to read their Bibles, and who pray very little on a day to day basis. The problem is that the gospel or the kingdom of heaven is not considered by them to be a treasure worth much of anything at all.

When sacrifices are made in order to "put Jesus first," the sacrifices are made amidst groanings and complaints. What is sacrificed is done with a sour-face attitude and disposition which is attractive to no one - not even to their own children who frequently grow up with this mistaken concept of Christianity and turn away from it, being repulsed by it. Christianity which makes a man miserable is not worth much to its owner.

Merchants who go from one end of the earth to the other, and venture everything in search of worldly gain, may well put to shame many Christians who care so little for the Lord, and their own salvation.