

The Pearl of Great Price

Acts 10:1-8

Matthew 13:44-46

October 18, 2009

This morning you have heard two of Jesus' illustrations about the Kingdom of Heaven. In the first, Jesus basically says that some of us luck up and stumble across the Kingdom. In the second, he talks about one who was actively seeking the Kingdom.

The first illustration lets us know that it is possible to stumble across the Kingdom of God and all its value. To some of you it may sound a little crazy to think that someone could literally be caught off guard by the Kingdom of God. I have to admit that I find it a little bit much to bite.

However, in that illustration I believe that the emphasis is more on the person's reaction to the hidden treasure than on the method of its discovery. I believe this because the reaction is the same in both illustrations. In the hidden treasure and in the pearl of great price the person goes and sells all they have in order to obtain the object of great value they have found.

While I don't want to minimize the story of the hidden treasure, I would like to focus more on the story of the pearl of great price. I want to focus on this because I feel this is the more common scenario for folks who find Jesus these days. How many times have you heard of these two things working together:

1. A person accumulates great wealth;
2. That same person does not feel satisfied with what wealth can provide, and seeks fulfillment elsewhere.

I want to tell you this feeling of dissatisfaction is so common it is not just limited to those who have accumulated great wealth. There are plenty of people who are not wealthy in material possessions who still feel an empty place in their life. They constantly have this feeling that there must be something more to all of this rat race, this life they live, and so they search.

Now, they may not even know that they are seeking after something, but in the back of their mind they are always looking and listening.

In our parable of the pearl of great price we have a man who is on a mission to find that which is of great value. He believes that there is something out there worth looking for, or he would not be seeking after it. Finally, he finds it. He immediately recognizes the value of the pearl and is willing to sell all that he has in order to obtain it.

Now this parable is not suggesting that we can buy our salvation. I need to clear that up right now. You I can cannot earn our salvation, nor can we purchase it. It has already been purchased for us. Jesus Christ gave up his life in atonement for our sins so that we would not have to bear the rightful

punishment for them. It is only by the grace of God offered to us through faith in his Son, Jesus, that we are saved. But it is being a part of this salvation process – it is the value of being the recipient of so great a gift that is the greatest treasure – the pearl of great price.

Let's look into the Bible again for another example of one who was on the search for the pearl. Remember the man, Cornelius, in the Book of Acts. Cornelius was one who knew that there was something of great significance that was missing from his life and he had a dream – the dream showed him where to seek for the answer. His dream led him to have Peter at his house sharing the Good News of Jesus with him and his family. After hearing, they all embraced Jesus through faith and were baptized as new Christians.

Those who hunger and seek after the great treasure that God has for them will indeed find it. However, there is a price. Remember the story of the young rich man. He asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him to get rid of all that he had and follow him. The passage tells us that the man went away sad because he had great possessions.

There is a price to following Jesus. That price is not necessarily associated with money. I know of no place in scripture where it says a Christian cannot have money. Those with money are just held to a higher standard – they are required to demonstrate good stewardship of the gifts that have been entrusted to them. They are required not to have money as an idol or a god, but to bring it into obedience to the One True God. To those whom much is given, much is expected. However, there are other types of prices.

Like the man who was hunting after the object of ultimate value, we must be willing to give up all that we have in order to obtain it. The greatest thing that you can give up is your life. Actually you are giving up control over your own life. The scriptures tell us that we are bought with a price – so our lives under Jesus Christ are not our own. They must be willingly given over to the One who paid for them.

When Jesus told the rich young man to get rid of all that he had and follow him, Jesus was not begrudging the young man his money. Jesus was telling him that he had to give up his life as he knew it and submit to life with Jesus as his Lord. You and I are to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

What are you willing to give up for Jesus? How much of your life are you willing to place under the lordship of Jesus Christ?

Maybe you are that person who is still looking for that one thing that can give your life meaning. You are the one who is still looking for that object of ultimate value to which you can give your life. Maybe you don't know exactly what it is that you are looking for, but you have a feeling that you will know it when you find it.

If this is you, pray. Pray that God will lead you to the place that you need to be; pray that your eyes and heart will be opened so that you will see the Truth that is in Jesus. If you are earnestly seeking, God will be faithful.

If you are one who knows that Jesus is the Pearl, but are still wondering if life as a Christian under the lordship of Jesus is worth giving up living life for your own causes – if you are that person, I wish I could invite those who have passed on to give us their perspective. Though those who have passed may have suffered greatly in this life. Yet as they have now come to experience the hundredfold blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven, I am sure that they would joyfully respond, “Yes, it is surely worth it all.”

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior AND Lord, please begin that search right now. Undergird it with prayer, and watch as God leads you to his Son. If you need help along the way, that’s what the Church is for – call on those around you for guidance and support. And when you are ready, ask Jesus into your heart, and turn your life over to him. When you do, be prepared to receive all of the blessings of heaven right here on earth.