

Matthew 13:44-52

The Parable of the Treasure in the Field, and Pearl of Great Value

Grace, peace, and mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

I ran across an article this week about the greatest find on the Antique Road Show. It was a set of Chinese cups carved from rhino horns. The appraiser assessed the value between 1 to 1.5 million dollars. The one who possessed these cups responded. {"Wow! I guess I will not need to depend on Social Security." I suppose, but only if you can find someone who will pay over a million dollars for rhino horns.

The kingdom of God is not like that. I believe that 1-1.5 million will not even begin to touch it! I wonder if we really have any idea what we really have through our faith in Jesus. Just what a true treasure it is!

I like what Anne Dillard wrote in, "Teaching a Stone to Talk."

Does anyone have the foggiest idea of what sort of power we so blithely we invoke? Or, does no one believe a word of it. Every Sunday morning churches are like children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, unaware that they are mixing a batch of TNT with the power to blow the whole place up. It is madness to wear ladies straw hats and velvet hats to church. We should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares. They should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping God may awake one day and take offense. Or the waking God could draw us to a place to where we can never return."

Really, I guess I will not need to depend on Social Security. I wonder if we really understand what gift God has given us. That is what the church is like, many not aware of the true value of our faith. Do we love and trust in Him above all things? Do we call upon Him in times of trouble, or draw near to Him in prayer, praise and thanksgiving? Do we hold God's Word sacred and gladly hear it and learn from it?

But, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in field, which someone hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

And again, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

In both parables a man finds what he has been searching for and when he finds it he sells all that he has to obtain it. He does not negotiate for it. He does not bargain for it. He sells all that he has to obtain it. If he inherited it or if put down a dollar down a for lottery ticket and struck it rich it would make a nice story. He sells all that he has. Everything. Not just a few extras that make life good. He sold it all. It sounds like a pretty high price. What could be worth everything that he had? Do we really see the priceless value in the Kingdom of Heaven?

One time Jesus was sitting in the temple watching the offering procession. Many were dropping in larger sums of money into the offering box, but a widow dropped in two copper coins worth a penny. Jesus commends the widow because she contributed out of her poverty while the others gave out of their abundance. The widow gave all that she had to live on.

Another time a young man came and asked Jesus one of those life-searching questions, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to do the commandments, honor your father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, or steal, or bear false witness, or covet. The young man said he had done all of these since his youth. Jesus responded that he lacked one thing. God and sell all that you have, give the money to the poor and follow me. On hearing this the young man walked away dejected because he was rich. The price was too high because he did not realize the value of what Jesus offered him.

Maybe we feel the same way about the man who sold all that he had to obtain a field with a treasure or a pearl of great value. It is not natural. I think he could have negotiated for those things. Made an offer trying strike a good deal.

There is one thing that jumps out here in these parables. In His great joy he sold everything to obtain it. His joy compels him to sell everything after his searching leads to his finding. He sells it all and he is happy to do it to obtain the treasure or the pearl.

Here is another thing even if we were find these treasures and realize their true value, would selling everything we have be enough.

Sometimes Liz and me would go for a ride that would take us through some ritzy neighborhoods. We would see houses and land worth well into the millions. Boy it sure would be nice to get something like that. Now if I found a house for sale and in my great joy I sold everything I had, would everything I have be enough? Probably not. In fact the value of the Kingdom of Heaven and the gifts that we have in faith are never enough.

If we have been looking at this parable as guide as something I must do when I stumble upon the Kingdom of Heaven which is located in Jesus Christ, we are always going to come up short. If truth be known, the man who searched for the treasure or the pearl is Jesus Christ. The

Treasure is you whom He has sought and upon finding you, in his great joy sold all everything. Did not count equality with God as a thing to be taken advantage of, but became one of us and humbled himself even to the point of death, yes even death on a cross where he purchased you not with silver and gold, but with his own holy suffering and the shedding of his precious blood so that you may be His own, and live with him in blessedness and righteousness and innocence in His Kingdom.

All that Jesus our Lord and savior had, His hands, His feet, His side, His Head, Sold all the power that belonged to him, he sold it all so that you could be His own. He did it in His joy because he knew your value.

It is not so much of your value that he bought you with price that his blood accomplished. It was not even that you we are more numerous. It was because of His love for you and the keeping of His promises he swore to your fathers.

Because of this we are God's treasured possession, You are a Holy people called to proclaim God's goodness and steadfast love.

Now who did he pay it too. He paid it to you. It is as clear as the one who hangs on the cross. He paid it to you. Your sins are forgiven. You have the hope of eternal life. You are His Treasured ones and precious shining pearl shining with the light of Christ. He has given you his life, and best of all a he has given you a relationship of faith and trust.

And that is what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

The peace of God that passes all understanding guard your heart and minds in Christ Jesus.

