

Sunday Morning Message

May 21, 2017

You Are a Pearl of Great Price

Text – Matthew 13

Congregational Reading – Matthew 13:45 - 46

"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." (Matthew 13:44-46)

Introduction

Matthew 13 is a chapter full of parables. Parables are defined as earthly stories or illustrations that convey a great spiritual meaning. Some would argue that these parables told by our Lord were all fictitious, but since Jesus is omniscient and omnipresent; and, since He has been that way through all generations of all people in the past; and, since He can see into the future, I believe that every one of these stories are actual events that Jesus has personally observed.

Another interesting observation regarding parables is that they both reveal and conceal truth. They are somewhat mysterious. They are designed to teach truth to those who have eyes to see, and for those who have ears to hear. Jesus taught them to his disciples who would be able to understand them, but only with His help. Others, who were not believers, would come away from these teachings perhaps more confused than before they heard them. Today, believers have the Holy Spirit of God within them, and coupled with the clues that Jesus taught us, we can glean wonderful principles that will encourage and strengthen us as we serve the Lord here on this earth.

Read Matthew 13:10 – 17 to hear Jesus explain His use of parables to His disciples.

The religious leaders had already made plain their rejection of the Lord Jesus. In Matthew 12:24, the Pharisees declared that Jesus power came not from God, but from Satan. In Matthew 12:46 – 50, Jesus rejected the concept that a person's birth entitled him to a relationship with God. In Matthew 13, He begins using parables, because those whose hearts were open would be able (with help) to understand the spiritual principles He was teaching. Conversely, those who had rejected Him would not have a clue as to what He was saying.

Paul stated:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Parables are spiritually discerned, and we need to ask God's Holy Spirit to help us to spiritually see what Jesus is teaching.

There are many parables in the Bible, and they are not exclusive to Jesus alone. But, here in the three synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke; you can find about forty of them.

Matthew 13 is perhaps one of the more familiar places in the Bible where parables are found:

- 1 The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1 – 9; explained in Matthew 13:18 – 23)
- 2 The Parable of the Tares (Matthew 13:24 – 30; explained in Matthew 13:36 – 43)

Note – I call these two parables “didactic parables” because in them Jesus gives us clues or instruction in His explanation of these parables that help us understand many other parables.

- 3 The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31 – 32)
- 4 The Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)
- 5 The Parable of the Treasure Hid in the Field (Matthew 13:44)
- 6 The Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:45 and 46)
- 7 The Parable of the Fishing Net (Matthew 13:47 – 50)
- 8 The Parable of the Householder (Matthew 13:52)

Our focus this morning is on the *The Parable of the Pearl* found in Matthew 13:45 – 46, but we will first look at a very similar parable – *The Parable of the Treasure Hid in the Field*, which will help us understand the *The Parable of the Pearl*. Again, these two parables are very similar, but there are two different groups of people in view.

"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."

(Matthew 13:44)

In this parable, as well as in the *The Parable of the Pearl*, there are two common, yet opposing interpretations.

The first interpretation that is commonly given by Bible teachers regarding this parable, which I believe to be wrong, is that the man in this parable represents the lost sinner who discovers a hidden treasure – the gospel – and gives up everything that he has so that he can buy the field, which contains the treasure. I believe this view to be wrong for a few reasons, but the main reason is that it teaches a works salvation. The lost sinner here is the one that is doing all of the work in order to secure the treasure. He is purchasing salvation and salvation cannot be purchased; it is a gift:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

(Romans 6:23)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Likewise, in the *The Parable of the Pearl*, there are some who state that the pearl of great price is salvation, and the one who sells all and purchases it, is the lost sinner who recognizes its worth.

This line of thinking in both of these parables is inaccurate.

The right interpretation for *The Parable of the Treasure in the Field* is that the man who purchases the field is the Lord Jesus. And, He purchased it with His life. He gave everything in order to buy it.

The treasure in this first parable is Israel. The field is the world (according to what Jesus taught us in v. 38). The people of Israel are buried today, hidden inside of the world. They are actually scattered throughout the world, but someday the Lord Jesus will come and gather them all together and set up His kingdom. There are far more Jewish people living outside of Israel today than there are inside of Israel. And, it wasn't until 1948 that Israel was given back part of her land. For centuries Israel was without their own nation.

Jesus has purchased Israel with His own blood, and someday they will understand that and will put their faith in Him:

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10)

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" (Romans 11:26)

Someday soon, the treasure (Israel) will come out from where they are hidden throughout the world. God is not finished with Israel. He has them hidden. He's protecting them.

Now, let's examine the *The Parable of the Pearl*.

"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." (Matthew 13:45-46)

This parable is very similar, but there is a different group of people in mind here. The man in this parable is the same as in the last one – The Lord Jesus Christ. The price that He paid is the

same as in *The Parable of the Treasure Hid in the Field* – He gave all that He had; He gave His life. The purchase, however, is different. Here, he purchases a pearl. What does the pearl represent? I believe the pearl is the Church. Think about how a pearl is formed. It starts out as a piece of sand, or some other worthless particle, that gets inside of an oyster, which will irritate it much like a splinter will irritate a finger. The oyster has a substance that it produces called nacre ('nākər), which coats the irritating particle in order to bring itself relief. Eventually, these coatings will produce a beautiful pearl. The pearl will keep growing as long as the oyster lives.

Illustration – Oysters are not the only shell creatures that can produce pearls. Clams and mussels will also produce pearls, but they are less common. The largest pearl known to man is 75 pounds and was harvested from a clam, not an oyster.

How does this pearl of great price relate to the Church? You and I were also just worthless little specks – irritants. But, we have been coated with a robe of righteousness, which makes us very beautiful to the Lord. The Lord sees us as very valuable – not as that irritating little speck that we started out as; and, not even as the partially recreated and incompletely transformed beings that we are now. He sees the finished product. He knows what we will be someday – in Heaven – when the transformation process is complete. The Church is actually made up of many beautiful little pearls that will someday be completely transformed and then gathered together to become His Pearl of Great Price – His Bride.

Supporting verses:

He purchased us:

*"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.**" (Acts 20:28)*

We will someday be different:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)

The New Jerusalem - the future dwelling place of the Church – has gates of pearl:

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

*And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ... **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl:** and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." (Revelation 21:9-11, 21)*

Practical Thoughts

- 1 You started out worthless – just a little, irritating speck
- 2 Positionally, He covered you with a robe of righteousness, and He will someday completely transform you into something very beautiful. You are beautiful to Him now, only because He can see you as you will be. The transformation began the day you trusted Christ, but it will not be complete until He brings you to Heaven.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

You have been saved from the penalty of sin.

You are being saved today from the power of sin. But your sin nature is still there, battling with the New Creature within you – The Holy Spirit of God.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," (Ephesians 1:13)

You will someday be saved from the presence of sin. Your sin nature will be eradicated, and you be perfect, without spot or blemish.

- 3 You are of great value to Him. He loves you completely. He searched for you. You weren't looking for Him. He found you and He paid it all to purchase you.

"But God commendeth (demonstrated, revealed, proved, showed) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6-7)

- 4 You should return the love that He showed you by living for Him. By fully yielding yourself to His will.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us;..." (2 Corinthians 5:14a)

- 5 You should help Him find the other little pearls that will also someday make up His Pearl of Great Price. There are many others out there that need salvation. Our job is to find them.
- 6 You should learn to look at the other pearls that He has and love them and appreciate them the way He does. The way He values you is the same way that He values His other children.

Illustrate – That person that you can't stand is a person that He loves dearly; and, He wants you to love them dearly as well. I know they are a little irritating now, but He is not finished coating them yet. By the way, you are a little irritating too.

Conclusion

You and I are just worthless, small, irritating specks; but when God gets done with us, we will be beautiful pearls of great price. He sees what we will be. We cannot, but we trust in what He sees. We need to start believing in what God sees about us, and what God sees about others who belong to Him. We need to stop seeing ourselves as and acting like the irritating little specks that we were, and start living the holy and pure lives like the pearls that we will be. And we need to start seeing the pearls around us and appreciate their value as God does: our spouses, our children, and our brothers and sisters in Christ.