

STUDY ON THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

People of the Kingdom - Parable

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful 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**)

There are 2 Parables here:

1. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure... and
2. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Q: In the parable of the Hidden Treasure, what would the field symbolise - looking into the parable of the soils?

The point of these parables lies in the nature and actions of those who discover the great treasure. In both parables, the man who discovered the treasure and the merchant who found the pearl are identical. There is a point of contrast in there and will not be over-looked. The man who found the hidden treasure was apparently not looking for it - his discovery was an accident but in the case of the merchant, the finding of the pearl was the result of a long and faithful quest.

Reading into these two parables, for although the man and the merchant were different up to the point at which the treasure was before them, from then on, their thoughts and actions were identical. What did they do?

1. They recognized the value of what they had found.
2. They determined to have it.
3. They sold everything in order to make their purchase.
4. They acquired the treasure.

It is not surprising that the merchant recognized the value of that special pearl, for he had been seeking pearls and had presumably learned their value (or lack of value) through his seeking. Nor is it surprising that the man who discovered the hidden treasure saw its value. He was not seeking, but we can hardly imagine him casually kicking at the treasure with his foot and walking on. A treasure is valuable, after all. 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 kingdom.

Do you want to know the character of those who we liken to this man or the merchant?

- He is one that says with David, *"I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the rents of wickedness"* (**Psalm 84:10**).
- He is one that says of God 's laws, *"They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold"* (**Psalm 19:10**).
- He is one that declares, *"Therefore I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore, I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way"* (**Psalm 119:127-128**).
- He is one who cries, *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* (**Philippians 3:13-14**).

A person like that has already had a change of values. He has recognized the poverty of all that comes from men and women and has seen the true splendour of the gospel.

Both men see the value of their discovery and decide, as they reflected on it, that it would be too much trouble to acquire the treasure or the pearl for themselves. They would have to adjust their priorities. They would have to sell their goods, change their lifestyle. That would take time and effort. It might be misunderstood by family or friends. True, it would make them rich, but it would be too much trouble. We may imagine a situation like that, but such is not the case of the ones described in those parables.

Another point of similarity between the two individuals. Having recognized the value of their find and having determined to have it, they next sold all they had to make the purchase. Clearly, it is a picture of renouncing everything that might be a hindrance to attaining that great prize.

Interpretation

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man who is not searching but found a treasure of great value (the kingdom of God and its attributes). We could say that GRACE was extended to this man, but he still needs to pay the price to acquire this great treasure.

In the second parable, the merchant was searching until he found the pearl of great value (the kingdom of God and its attributes). Unlike the previous parable, this person searched and found, and he still need to pay the price to acquire this pearl.

The similarities of these two short parables make it clear they teach the same lesson—the kingdom of heaven is of inestimable value. Both parables involve a man who sold all he had to possess the kingdom. The treasure and the pearl represent Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers among other kingdom attributes. And while we cannot pay for salvation by selling all our worldly goods, once we have found the prize, we are willing to give up everything to possess it. But what is attained in exchange is so much more valuable that it is comparable to trading an ounce of trash for a ton of diamonds.

In both parables, the treasures are hidden, indicating that spiritual truth is missed by many and cannot be found by intelligence or power or worldly wisdom. In Matthew 13:1-23, in the parable of the soils, the word is only profitable to those who receive the word in “good soil” or “hearts”. For the other soils, the parable made it clear that the mysteries of the kingdom are hidden from some who are unable to hear, see, and comprehend these truths. The devil and his cohorts steal the word, and it becomes unprofitable to those it is meant to benefit.

The disobedient reap the natural consequences of their unbelief—spiritual blindness. Those whose eyes are opened by the Spirit do discern spiritual truth, and they, like the men in the parable, understand its great value.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory... But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:7-8, 14)

Notice that the merchant stopped seeking pearls when he found the pearl of great price. Eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, and the love of God through Christ constitute the pearl which, once found, makes further searching unnecessary. Christ fulfills our greatest needs, satisfies our longings, makes us whole and clean before God, calms and quiets our hearts, and gives us hope for the future.

Based on these two parables, we can deduce the meaning of this hidden treasure and pearl of great price:

1. Jesus and the Salvation He gives

2. Eternal life which makes this temporal life of limited value
3. God's Word / Revelation which makes all earthly knowledge of limited value
4. The entire gospel / good news which so astounds the woman at the well that she left all... to relay the news; that made Peter and his friends leave their great catch and profession, and follow the Master, and most of the early apostles were willing to give their life for.

"The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him." (John 4:28-30)

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." (John 4:39)

"For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So, when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him." (Luke 5:9-11)

Also, based on these two parables, we can deduce the price paid. Both parables claimed that "they sold all that they had" because of what they found. Two scriptural passages that comes to mind are:

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-62)

"Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:25-33)

In these parables and scriptures above, Jesus is saying that the kingdom of heaven demands all.

Q: What are the types of things that we would have to sell or give up?

Q: Are you like the man who found the hidden treasure and sold all for the sake of this treasure?

Q: Are you like the merchant who discovered a pearl of great price and sold all to get it?

THESE ARE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN REALITIES TAUGHT BY JESUS IN PARABLES.