

## THE HIDDEN TREASURE -- THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister  
 Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ  
 of Latter Day Saints  
 Independence, Missouri

All Rights Reserved

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:44-46

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

How much is the kingdom of God worth to you? How high a value do you place upon it? The twin parables of the Hidden Treasure and of the Pearl of Great Price are designed to teach the true worth of the Kingdom. There are very short; each of them contains only one sentence, but in them may be found the reason why we have waited so long for the kingdom of God to come on earth. We have not placed a high enough value on it. We have lightly regarded its true worth. We have not been willing to pay the cost.

We notice immediately on reading these two short parables that they have some things in common. The discoverer of the treasure and the merchant man who found the pearl of great price went and sold all that they had in order to come into possession of the thing which they desired above everything else in the world. They did not haggle or quibble over the price or try to beat it down; they recognized that even if they spent their all, the thing they received in return was worth everything they had and more. I like that phrase, "All that he had." It suggests to me that each man went over his most insignificant possessions, searching out anything that could be turned into cash -- his furniture, his clothing, his food for that day, his domestic animals, his tools -- everything. There was no holding back of this or that for sentimental reasons or because he felt he would be left insecure and poor without it. Each man went and sold all that he had in order that he might buy the field which held the buried treasure or the pearl of great price.

Right there I believe is the principal lesson of the two parables. The kingdom costs us all that we have, all that we are, all that we ever hope to be, but it is worth it. If we try to hold out something, if we try to haggle over the price, if we are fearful about what the future will be without the things we must give up to have the kingdom, then we are not worthy of having it and we shall not have it. The kingdom is never offered in a bargain basement at cut prices for what ever a man has conveniently handy in his pockets and wants to give up at the moment. The kingdom demands the unconditional and complete surrender of a dedicated life in all of its compartments.

Consider for a moment the case of Ananias, whose sad story is told in the 5th chapter of Acts. When it came time for the New Testament church to make a consecration of surplus property for the good of the poor, Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a certain possession which they did not need, intending to give the proceeds to the church for the relief of the poor. But when they actually saw the money they thought they could get by perhaps for half price. They kept back a part of the proceeds, but gave half with a great air of piety and a show of zealous consecration. The apostles were not deceived. One does not buy the kingdom for half price. One does not half surrender to Christ. It's all or none.

On the other hand, Paul is an example of one who did give all for the kingdom -- his family, his friends, his former associations, his education, his racial traditions and customs all counted for nothing when he found Christ and the kingdom. He could

truthfully and yet not at all boastingly write to the Philippians, "What things were gain to me, those I counted lost for Christ. Yea doubtless and I call all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him."

In neither parable is there any mention of reluctance, or unhappiness, or self-pity, because of the great sacrifice which is being made. In each parable there is a sense of joy at having found something that is well worth all that it costs and more, and when once in the possession of the new owner, will give him a sense of satisfaction and happiness and joy which will exceed and transcend anything he has ever known before. The kingdom is a joy, but a burden to those who find it, Securing it, paying the price for it, is a privilege not a burden; an opportunity and not a sacrifice. It brings joy not sorrow; exaltation not depression; a sense of peace and security, not a spirit of fear.

Now there are some differences between these two parables which are also significant. The treasure might have been valued because of the other things it would buy. He who finds the kingdom and gives up all to possess it does discover that once he has made that surrender, there are many other things which grow out of his new possession, many things which he may now buy which were denied to him before. On the other hand the merchant man valued the pearl not for what it would buy, but for itself. He did not buy it with the idea of selling it at a profit; he bought the pearl because it was the most perfect, the most desirable, the most satisfyingly beautiful pearl he had ever seen. He simply wanted to possess it for himself in order that he might also have the pleasant stimulation and inspiration of its beauty. Possession of the kingdom will bring other blessings as a result or a consequence, but possession of the kingdom is also worthwhile just simply for its own sake, for the joy and satisfaction that such a possession will bring.

Another significant difference between these two similar parables is that the man who discovered the treasure in the field, discovered it quite by accident. In Palestine where there were no banks and where conquering armies had many times ravished and pillaged the countryside, it was not uncommon to find little treasure troves buried in the earth by some forgotten man who had either been killed or carried captive into some far country. Perhaps the man who discovered the treasure of the parable had been plowing, perhaps his careless kick at a stone had turned up the gold coin. At any rate, the fact that he had not been looking for it did not decrease his joy in finding it. Some people who are not looking for the kingdom especially find it by accident, but they may possess it as completely as those who find it only after long searching, if they are willing to pay the price.

The merchant man found the pearl of great price only after long and diligent search. He was looking for that pearl. He was a good judge of pearls, a connoisseur of their beauty and worth. All of his life perhaps he had been seeking the one perfect flawless pearl, the pearl with perfect proportions, perfect iridescence, and perfect structure. He had already seen many good pearls, but never the supremely perfect one. When he did find that one pearl of great price after long search, he knew in a moment that that was what he wanted and that it was worth all that he had. He was also a man of action. Knowing what he wanted, he acted; he sold all that he had and bought the pearl.

Whether you stumble upon the kingdom by accident or whether you have spent your lifetime in looking for it, would you know it if you found it? Would you be willing to give up all that you are, all that you have, in order to possess the treasure, the beauty, the worth, the satisfaction of the kingdom? Many of us indicate our true evaluation of the worth of the kingdom by our apathy, our lack of interest, our lack of any effort of seeking it out, by our unwillingness to give up anything really important in order to possess it, and oftentimes by our carelessness to guarding it once we do come into possession of it.

Have you found the treasure of the kingdom, the pearl of great price? If you are willing to pay the price asked for it, you shall have joy untold.