

Pearl of Great Price

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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

Introduction:

1. Rather than waste even a minute talking about pearls, let us focus on embracing the kingdom of Christ.
2. John the Baptist came on the scene in 26 A.D. declaring the kingdom of heaven at hand (Matt 3:1-6).
3. It is simple – a pearl merchant found an incredibly superior one and invested his whole business in it, which was taught by our Lord, as by the previous treasure in a field, to provoke all-in pursuit of Christ.
4. There is no diversification in this investment plan, for anything held back cheats God and hurts you.
5. The N.T. gospel era, including Christ's local churches, are an incredible blessing, for it has the true worship of Jehovah God through His Son, the knowledge of eternal life, and Holy Spirit fellowship.

Once upon a time in Ethiopia, a dedicated eunuch worked tirelessly and earned a prominent position. His diligence and loyalty earned him the trust of the queen, who entrusted him with her vast treasure. Despite his success, the eunuch struggled with the polytheistic gods of his land, feeling a deep longing for something more meaningful. By the grace of Jehovah, he began to seek the true Creator God worshipped in the neighboring nation of Israel. When he finally had the opportunity for a vacation, he took a chariot and embarked on a long journey—over 4,500 miles roundtrip—to visit Jerusalem, not Mecca, or for worldly riches, but to see the temple worship of Jehovah. While there, he spent his hard-earned money to buy a copy of the prophet Isaiah. During his visit, he encountered a new sect called Christians—followers of Jesus who were baptized in water to identify with their Lord Christ. Moved by what he saw, he worshiped Jehovah in His temple and then turned southward to get back to Ethiopia. But during his trip home he did not simply enjoy the scenery or his horses; his heart was fixated on Isaiah 53, a prophecy about the suffering Servant. As he read, God arranged for Philip, a Jewish stranger, to approach him. The eunuch invited Philip to ride in his chariot and teach him more about the suffering and early death in Isaiah 53. Philip explained that Isaiah's prophecy was about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The eunuch, having some knowledge of the Christian faith from Jerusalem, grasped the significance of baptism when they came upon water. He asked Philip if he could be baptized. When Philip confirmed his faith, the eunuch commanded his driver to stop the chariot. In that quiet oasis, Philip baptized him by immersion into Jesus Christ. Immediately afterward, Philip disappeared from sight, but the joy in the eunuch's heart was powerful and permanent. He returned home transformed, knowing he had found the true worship of Jehovah God through His incarnate Son that died, rose, and ascended for him. This powerful encounter happened because the eunuch valued true worship deeply. He was willing to travel great distances, spend his wealth, and face significant differences from his culture—all to seek the one true God and His kingdom. Almighty God and His Son provided the way for him, because he searched for Him with all his heart. The eunuch's pursuit of true worship was like the merchant in Jesus' parable—he saw the kingdom as a precious pearl of great price. When he found the gospel and the truth about Jesus, he recognized it as worth everything he had. He was willing to sell all to buy that pearl, to belong fully to Christ's kingdom and serve Him faithfully. His life now reflected the greatest treasure of all—the kingdom of God. He was not content with just knowing about God; he wanted to be part of His family, serving Christ and living according to His revealed truth in the gospel. Do you, like him, crave genuine worship? Are you willing to give up everything—your possessions, your comfort—to gain the kingdom of Christ? The eunuch's story shows us that true worship and salvation are priceless, and those who seek with all their heart will find the greatest treasure—eternal life and divine fellowship in God's kingdom.

Once upon a time, there was a devout man named Cornelius in Caesarea, a Roman officer who truly feared God with all his house. He was a man of prayer, kindness, and faith—yet, despite his sincere worship, he prayed for more. He longed for a deeper connection with the true God Jehovah of Israel and what he should do for Him. One day, as he prayed, an angel appeared to him and said, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” The angel instructed Cornelius to send men to Joppa to find a man named Simon Peter, who was staying with Simon the tanner by the seaside, for he would be able to tell Cornelius all he needed to do religiously. Without hesitation, Cornelius obeyed. He sent three messengers, willing to spend and do anything necessary to seek the truth. Meanwhile, Peter, in Joppa, received a vision from God that changed his understanding about clean and unclean foods and about God’s grace to Gentiles. Peter realized that the gospel was for everyone, not just Jews. When the messengers arrived, Peter obeyed God’s call and went with them to Cornelius’s house. There, he saw many people gathered, eager to hear whatever he preached to them. Peter preached boldly about Jesus Christ—His life, death, resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit freely given to all who believe. As Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles hearing the word of God. Witnessing this, Peter understood that God’s kingdom was open to all who would truly seek Him. He commanded that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and Cornelius and his household believed and were baptized, receiving the Spirit before baptism. From that moment, Cornelius’s life was changed. He had gone to some lengths—spending, sending, risking, sacrificing—to find the truth. His sincere pursuit of God’s kingdom was like the merchant in Jesus’ parable—he recognized the gospel of Christ was a priceless pearl of great price. He saw that it was worth giving everything—his wealth, his status, and even his cultural boundaries—to be part of God’s kingdom. Cornelius’s story shows us that true faith involves a willing sacrifice. Just as the pearl of great price is worth selling everything to possess, the salvation found in Christ is the greatest treasure anyone can seek. Cornelius’s devotion and determination to find God’s truth show the heart of someone who values the kingdom of Christ above all else. Are you, like him, searching with all your heart? Will you go to lengths, make sacrifices, and give up everything for the knowledge and approval of Jesus? His story reminds us that God’s grace is abundant, and those who seek Him sincerely will find the greatest treasure—eternal life and fellowship with God and His Son in the gospel.

Merchant Man

- A. We must remember with this parable, like others, not to focus too much on the details.
- B. Most every man/woman wants to find their fulfillment, purpose, joy, and success in life.
- C. But this merchant man can be an elect, regenerate child of God seeking, like Nicodemus.
- D. But you must seek, and it cannot be secondary or weak, as Solomon wrote (Pr 2:1-9).
- E. The eunuch sought by going to Jerusalem, and Cornelius sought by praying and giving.

Deceitful Pearls

- A. These are the soap bubbles of vanity that the world, our flesh, and Satan entice us with.
- B. Solomon worked hard to test all the bubbles of life (Eccl 2:1-12; 7:18; 8:12; 12:13-14).
- C. Jeremiah warned to glory in God over glorying in wisdom, might, riches (Jer 9:23-24).
- D. The world’s junk will all pass away, but those with the pearl live forever (I Jn 2:15-17).
- E. Paul was fully committed to Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Cor 2:2; Galatians 6:14).
- F. The joy of discovering the pearl of great price is wonderful ... never let it slip or die, for Jesus expects us to maintain or return to our first love and not to become lukewarm.
- G. Most believers are thrilled to find the pearl, get baptized, and then join Christ’s church.

Marred Pearls

- A. These pearls are churches with doctrine and practice not acceptable to Paul or to God.
- B. Not every person or institution that uses the words Jesus, spirit, or gospel are fine pearls.

- C. We see *legal*, *spiritual* (candlestick), and *practical* churches (right doctrine), and this order allows false doctrine with a candlestick (Rev 2:14-15; Gal 3:27; I Cor 3:16; etc.), and it is the duty of Christians to find what they can test – a *practical* church in truth.
- D. There are comfortable churches where all is fun without work, but are these the Lord's?
- E. Less for comfort, His churches are for conviction, conversion, correction, conformation.
- F. Less for ease, His churches are for exhortation, edification, evangelism, and enduring.
- G. True disciples want to be admonished, corrected, exhorted, pressed, urged, warned.
- H. They know that gaining the pearl of great price takes commitment, cost, continuing.

Pearl of Great Price

- A. The kingdom of heaven began with John and Jesus as the N.T. era of the gospel of grace.
- B. Let us simplify it as much as possible lest we lose the main lesson for distracting details.
- C. God's kingdom is the overall realm and reign of Jesus Christ that is unseen to the world.
- D. Paul obsessed about Jesus Christ and His crucifixion for him (I Cor 2:2; Galatians 6:14).
- E. It is the perfect revelation of life and immortality for which men seek (II Timothy 1:10).
- F. It replaced the law of Moses and reformed God's worship (Jn 1:17; 4:20-24; Heb 9:10).
- G. It is entered by repentance and baptism to submit to the rightful rule of Jesus over you.
- H. It includes **each faithful local church** (not perfect) as Christ's body, bride, and fulness.
 - I. The Holy Spirit lives in each faithful church (never perfect) membership (Eph 2:22).
- J. It includes the ministerial gifts given by the ascended Christ to His churches for profit.
- K. It includes the incredible gift of divine truth and the true worship of God (I Tim 3:15).
- L. The pearl includes scripture – the KJV and hermeneutics (Psalm 19:10; 119:72,127).
- M. It is the only acceptable way to worship Jehovah (Romans 14:17-18; Heb 12:28-29).
- N. Jesus is worshipped in churches, as the N.T. shows exclusively, starting from Pentecost.
- O. Paul told even the Corinthians that all things were for them up to God (I Cor 3:21-23).
- P. Full consideration of the kingdom of heaven includes the Day of Judgment (Mat 13:47).
- Q. Provided to exalt the glory of the local church, three tables of pearl features are below.

Holy Jealousy

- A. What Jesus called hiding, seeking it for himself, we call holy jealousy (Matt 13:44); the hiding is not an evil action, for he cannot allow another to get it first; he will share later.
- B. To get and keep possession of it requires him to fear and do his best (Heb 4:1,11; 12:15).
- C. We are to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear of a righteous God (I Peter 1:17).
- D. If God gave you five pounds (money invested), you better get a return (Luke 19:11-27).
- E. You must fear even today how you hear the words of Christ of four ways (Luke 8:18).
- F. David asked, even while ridiculed, *Is there not a cause?* for God's glory (I Sam 17:29).
- G. The apostles gave thanks always for God's work in their belief in Christ (II Thess 2:13).

H. Solomon taught wisdom should be bought and never sold, and Christ is greater ... [the Proverbs 23:23 commentary](#).

I. For more about living with a proper degree of fear for Christ's kingdom ... [Sojourning in Fear, Running Scared](#).

Economics of It

- A. If you try to save your life by avoiding the cost of Christ's pearl, you will lose your life.
- B. If you are willing to lose your life for Him and the gospel, you will truly find your life.
- C. What if you gained the whole world but lost your soul ... you lose big (Matt 16:25-26).
- D. But there are many that will not pay the price for their love of this world (Matt 22:5).
- E. You never lose sacrificing for His kingdom; in fact, you get 10,000% (Mark 10:29-30).
- F. God's words are more valuable than much fine gold and sweeter than honey (Ps 19:10).
- G. Job described obedience to God as valuing His words above necessary food (Job 23:12).
- H. Solomon praised wisdom very highly in many ways, but Christ is greater (Pr 3:13-18).
- I. For much more about the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ and the gospel ... [The Unsearchable Riches of Christ \(5 Sermons\)](#).

Any Sacrifice For It

- A. The merchant threw diversification to the wind and invested everything in the one pearl.
- B. A price must be paid for the pearl of great price – all other competitors of every kind.
- C. Cornelius brought many together – family and friends – to hear Peter (Acts 10:24-33).
- D. God can and will be found, when you search for Him with all your heart (Jer 29:13).
- E. From Moses, without N.T. riches, your all is the command (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:36-40).
- F. Josiah found the pearl in lost scripture and was the greatest revivalist (II Kings 23:25).
- G. Asa and Hezekiah also led great revivals, Asa even putting his mother down for idolatry.
- H. Three Hebrew men were not careful to answer angry Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:16-18).
- I. Wise men traveled far to follow a star to the pearl for great joy and gifts (Matt 2:1-12).
- J. Jesus taught counting the cost to hate all things competing with Him (Luke 14:25-33).
- K. Converts from witchcraft paid 50,000 pieces of silver for the pearl (Acts 19:18-20).
- L. Most Christians that read the Bible know Paul counted all else loss and dung (Phil 3:8).

Priority of It

- A. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God (or the church) is your first priority (Matt 6:33), which is a rule that should be taught and shown to children by parents for true disciples.
- B. Jesus taught that His investment of grace in showing you the great pearl better bring a good return, or He will take away from you what you think you have (Luke 19:11-27).
- C. The great crowd that heard Ezra wept for conviction and celebrated for understanding.
- D. We want to lay up treasures in heaven by loving God's gift of His pearl (Matt 6:19-21).

- E. But many, especially in these perilous times, will turn away like Demas from enduring.
- F. The pearl of great price requires enduring sound doctrine, not always enjoying doctrine.
- G. One of the great pleasures of life is to share the pearl of great price with other winners.
- H. Pleasure with God by yourself is not the emphasis of the N.T. but rather in His churches.
- I. David's love of the church was exceptional, and it should be ours (Psalm 27:4; 122:1).

Proof of It

- A. Jesus showed great zeal for the kingdom of God by protecting its worship (John 2:17).
- B. Paul wrote by the Spirit even to apostles that he labored more abundantly (I Cor 15:10).
- C. The martyrs loved not their lives unto death for the kingdom of Christ (Rev 12:10-11).
- D. Phinehas and Jehu did exceptional things to purge and purify the O.T. kingdom of God.
- E. How did the Maccabees prove they knew God, by their exploits for Him (Dan 11:32).
- F. Everything is done for the kingdom, including your job (Col 3:22-25; I Cor 10:31-33).
- G. You should give all diligence in bearing fruit to prove your possession (II Pet 1:5-11).
- H. Attending church is not enough, for the Bible gives it little value, but rather serving it.

Preserving It

- A. Apostles turned the world upside down by preaching the pearl to many other converts.
- B. Paul warned elders of coming wolves and some of them would corrupt (Acts 20:28-31).
- C. The family of Stephanas, even at messed up Corinth, were addicts to serve (I Cor 16:15).
- D. There will be difficult tribulation, far less than Jesus for you, but continue (Acts 14:22).
- E. We are only true disciples by continuing (John 8:31; 15:4-9; Hebrews 3:14; 10:38-39).
- F. Your initial baptism matters little now compared to continuing or increasing your love.
- G. Paul made it clear your life is measured by how you finish, not the start (Phil 3:12-14).
- H. We need each other to press each other to be the great lovers of Christ we should be.

Conclusion:

- 1. Every believing member in every faithful church (never perfect) should give thanks and help build it.
- 2. Scattered sheep, in and out of "churches," all over the world, wish they had what you have right now.
- 3. The church (and kingdom) of Jesus Christ is the most valuable treasure on earth. Do not neglect it.
- 4. You committed once, and the King of heaven knows; do not turn back, but renew love, praise, service.

For Further Study:

- 1. What Is a Church? ... [What is a Church? \(1\)](#)
- 2. [What Is a Great Church?](#)
- 3. [Great Church Members](#)
- 4. Church Higher Ground ... [Higher Ground \(20 Sermons\)](#).

5. The Gospel Millennium ... [Gospel Millennium \(8 Sermons\)](#).

What Is a Church?

God's Temple	Truth Defender	Personal Equalizer
Spirit's House	Salvation Source	Heaven's Magistrate
Christ's Body	Worship Center	Living Organism
Christ's Bride	Reality Check	Freedom Central
Potentate's Property	Chosen Overseers	Support Group
Scripture Repository	Protective Warning	Special Supper
Treasure Chest	God's Seminary	Fellowship Door
Christ's Prophecy	Small Claims Court	Praise Band
God's Israel	Welfare Agency	United Nations
Angelic Wonder	Competent Counselors	Living Epistles
Heavenly Connection	Synergistic Leverage	Secret Society
Inner Circle	Prayer Band	Mega Church
Royal Commission	Replacement Family	Hidden Wisdom
Priest Ordination	Best Friends	World Evangelism

What Is a Great Church?

Christ-Centric	Self-Correcting	Hospitable & Entertain	No Pagan Holidays
First Love – Hot	Disciplining	Internal Welfare	Marriage Only in Love
Regenerate Members	Coven Sin	Work Ethic	Children Trained
Spirit-Filled	Holiness	Scrupulously Honest	Five Authority Spheres
Doctrinal Dogmatism	Reverent Worship	Liberal	No Cremation
Preaching Emphasis	Zeal	Tithing / Giving	Passionate Marriages
Church Independence	Attendance	Pastoral Support	Traditional Marriages
Due-Order Details	Every Joint	Female Modesty	Patriarchal
A Capella Singing	Thanksgiving	Hair Length	Historicists
Perilous Times	Evangelism	Closed Communion	Banning Hall
Praying	Commission Fulfilled	Gifts – Cautionists	Ministerial Succession
Brotherly Love	Civil Obedience	Communion Elements	Christian Ethics
Forgiving	Christian Liberty	RCC is Antichrist	No Love Pallades
Peaceful	Passionate	No Secret Societies	Bible by Four F's
Unity	Joyful	Women Silent	Full-Time Pastors

What Are Great Church Members?

Understand Commitment	Obey One Another Rules	Love / Submit to Pastor
Walk and Delight in God	Grasp Diamond Love	Soul Winners In / Out
Live Holy Life / Hate Sin	Dely Comfort Zones	Forgiveness & Mercy
Crave More Holy Spirit	Love Church Like David	Have a Servant's Heart
Much Fruit of the Spirit	Not Myopic for Faults	Right Relationships
Diligent Bible Student	No Modeling in Others	Attend All for Others
Public/Private Prayer	Avoid or Crush Cliques	Avoid the Sin of Hate
Example to Children	Love Bible Preaching	Protect Reputations
Never Change or Vary	Invest in the Unconely	Emphasize Members