

# Kingdom Parables

## The Parable of the Pearl

### VII. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45

#### A. The Central Point of the Parable

The acquisition of the Kingdom is personal. There are some who find the Kingdom after they have been seeking for it. Once they find it, they are willing to give up everything to obtain it.

#### B. Significant Elements of the Parable

##### 1. The Merchant

Although the middle class of those days was very small, it was not uncommon for there to be merchants of the kind depicted in this parable.

This man was an entrepreneur who specialized in the purchase of pearls. A modern parallel would be a man who specialized in the buying of diamonds.

##### 2. The Pearl

After a long search, the man found a pearl that boasted such beauty and perfection that he sold everything to buy it.

We cannot grasp the significance of this parable unless we understand the value of the pearl in those days. Unlike today, where we have modern diving gear, pearl fishing was a very hazardous vocation in New Testament times. Most pearls were harvested in the Indian Ocean many thousands of miles from Palestine. They were harvested by divers who tied large rocks around their ankles to help them sink to the bottom. Once down there, they would quickly grab a few oysters and then cut the rope so they could rise to the surface. For obvious reasons, the mortality rate was high. Because of the hazards, and the distance, pearls commanded the highest price possible for any gem stone. In fact, they were of much greater value than diamonds.

Thus we see that the discovery of this particular pearl was an event which prompted the merchant to do anything to obtain it.

##### 3. His Possessions

As in the previous parable, this merchant sold everything he had to obtain this pearl. This would of necessity be a great amount, especially when we consider that the merchant was obviously a man of means. He had to be to pursue the vocation he was in.

#### C. Insignificant Elements of the Parable

None given.

#### D. Interpretation of the Parable

We will not need to spend a lot of time on interpreting this parable since we did most of the background work when interpreting the previous parable.

This parable, as the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, depicts the inestimable value of the Kingdom and the fact that once someone understands it's true value they will give up everything to obtain it.

##### 1. The Merchant

It is obvious that this merchant corresponds to the man in the previous parable. As a result, he depicts anyone who seeks the Kingdom.

However, unlike the man in the previous parable, this man does not happen upon the pearl, but is actively seeking it. This shows the opposite of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure in which the Kingdom is "found" by accident.

##### 2. The Pearl

The pearl corresponds to the hidden treasure. It is used to represent the value and worth of the Kingdom of God.

It is interesting to note that one of the pictures we have of heaven in the Bible is that it is a city with twelve gates, each gate made of pearl. (Revelation 21:21).

Understanding the value of the pearl also gives us new insight into Matthew 7:6 in which our Lord tells us to "not cast our pearls before swine." What he is in actuality saying is that the truths of the gospel are not to be thrown to those who mock and despise the truth. To do so would be like throwing pearls into a herd of swine. The scripture is too precious to be exposed to the mockers who hate God and all that he stands for.

##### 3. His Possessions

As in the previous Parable of the Hidden Treasure, the merchant sells everything he has to obtain the pearl. This is a graphic illustration of the fact that salvation is obtained when we are willing to forsake all for Christ.

One Bible expositor depicted salvation as a man who tries to enter through a stadium turnstile with a full backpack and his arms full of luggage. He will never make it through. The only way to enter would be to drop everything and go through alone.

For a further discussion of this point, refer to the previous discussion of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure.

#### E. Application of the Parable

1. There are those who actively seek the Kingdom before finding it.
2. Once a seeker finds the Kingdom, they are willing to forsake everything to obtain it.