

The Priceless Pearl

Lesson * 22: (Mt. 13:45-46; COL 115-121; Rev. 21:21; Phil. 3:7-8; Mk. 10:28-30)

The parable of the priceless pearl is one of many found in Matthew 13. Like so many other parables of Jesus, this one has more than one meaning. We will find in our study that the pearl, in one sense, represents Jesus Christ. But in another sense it represents us. Let's see what we can learn from this magnificent parable.

The First Meaning of the Parable

The Pearl and Its Value

1. Who is represented by the pearl of great price? “_____ Himself is the pearl of great price.” (COL 115)
2. What aspects of Christ can be compared to the beauty of a pearl? “The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in his _____. . . . The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without _____.” (COL 115)
3. What does the apostle Paul say about the value of Jesus? “In whom [Jesus] are _____ all the _____ of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3)
4. How does Peter corroborate what the apostle Paul says about the value of Jesus? “Foreasmuch as ye know that ye were not _____ with corruptible things, as silver and _____, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, But with the _____ blood of Christ, as a lamb without _____ and without _____.” (I Peter 1:18-19)
5. How does Ellen White describe the sufficiency of Christ? “All that can _____ the needs and _____ of the human soul, for this _____ and for the world to come, is _____ in Christ.” (COL 115)
6. What made it possible for Jesus to become our savior? “Though he were a _____, yet he learned _____ by the things which he _____; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal _____ unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. 5:8-9)

Note: A beautiful and priceless pearl is formed when a grain of sand irritates the oyster and causes it to secrete calcium carbonate. Thus the pearl is formed through much pain and suffering. Likewise, Jesus, by what he suffered, developed a priceless character which He will impute to those who are willing to surrender all to Him.

Identifying the Merchant

1. According to Ellen White, who is represented by the merchant? “The merchantman in the parable represents a _____ who were sincerely desiring _____.” (COL 116)
2. What two persons from among the Gentiles were searching for that which they could receive as the soul’s treasure? _____ (COL 116)

Note: It would be well at this point to review carefully the story of the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10-11 and the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-39.

3. Were there some among the Jews of Christ’s day who were dissatisfied with a formal religion and were seeking that which they had not? “Christ’s chosen _____ belonged to the latter class. . . .” (COL 116)

The Merchant’s Discernment

1. Who gives us the ability to see the incalculable value of the pearl, Jesus Christ? “It is the Holy Spirit that _____ to men the _____ of the goodly pearl.” (COL 118)
2. What does Christ say is one of the problems of the Laodicean church and how can the problem be remedied? “Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and _____, and naked. . . . and anoint thine eyes with _____ that thou mayest _____.” (Rev. 3:17-18)

Note: The seeker of goodly pearls must have keen discernment in order to detect which pearls are particularly valuable. They must have a trained eye or else they could pass up pearls which are priceless.

When Christ came to this world he had “no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2). Therefore He came to His own and His own received Him not (John 1:11). Those among whom Jesus walked had no spiritual discernment. They failed to discern the priceless beauty of His character. The same problem characterizes the Laodicean church. It is so busy establishing its own righteousness that it cannot discern the beauty of Christ’s righteousness. It needs the eye-salve of the Holy Spirit.

3. Were the Jews of Christ’s day able to discern the incalculable value of Christ? “To whom [Jesus] coming, as unto a living _____, disallowed indeed of _____, but chosen of God, and _____.” (I Pet. 2:4)

Note: Peter is referring here to an actual experience during the building of Solomon’s temple. Let’s allow Ellen White to explain what happened: “When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used

upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and bear the great weight which would rest upon it. Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. Others could not bear the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone. The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ.” (DA 597-598)

The Pearl’s Price

1. According to the parable, how much does the pearl cost? The merchantman “went and sold _____ that he had, and _____ it.” (Mt. 13:46)
2. Why do some people fail to find the priceless pearl? Because “they do not make an _____ surrender of their wrong habits. They do not _____ to _____ that Christ may live in them. . . . Almost _____, yet not _____ Christians, they seem near to the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot _____ there. Almost but not _____ saved, means to be not almost but _____ lost.” (COL 118)
3. Does everyone have an equal opportunity to buy the priceless pearl? “The gospel of Christ is a blessing that _____ may possess. The _____ are as well able as the _____ to purchase salvation; for no amount of worldly _____ can secure it. It is obtained by willing _____, by giving ourselves to Christ as His own purchased _____.” (COL 117)

Note: The cost of the pearl is the same for everyone because once everything is given, all have the same amount left, nothing. But, as we shall see, when we give up all that we have Jesus will give us all that He has—quite a tradeoff!!

4. What did Jesus say to the rich young ruler concerning the cost of salvation? “One thing thou _____: go thy way, sell _____ thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have _____ in heaven; and come, take up thy _____, and follow me.” (Mk. 10:21)

5. How much must we be willing to forsake in order to be Christ's disciple? "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not _____ that he hath, he _____ be my disciple." (Lk. 14:33)
6. How much was the apostle Paul willing to forsake in order to win Christ? "Yea, doubtless, and I count _____ things but loss for the _____ of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the _____ of _____ things, and do count them dung, that I may win _____." (Phil. 3:8)
7. Since Christ is represented in the Bible as a gift (Jn. 3:16), why are we told in the parable that we must "buy" Him? "He is a _____, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and _____ to Him without _____. . . . All that we are, all the _____ and capabilities we possess, are the _____, to be consecrated to His service." (COL 116)
8. What did Jesus mean when he said that we must forsake all our houses, lands, friends, and relatives (Mk. 10:29)? "He that loveth father or mother _____ than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter _____ than me is not worthy of me." (Mt. 10:37)

Note: Jesus was not instructing us to get rid of our possessions, friends and relatives, that is, unless these stand between us and Jesus. Our Lord was teaching that all things must be kept in their proper perspective: Jesus must be first and all other things must be last. The teaching of Jesus has to do with the way in which we order our priorities: Nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of our relationship with Jesus. The Master expressed it this way: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." (Mt. 6:33) Nothing we have must be allowed to occupy the primary place in our lives. Only Jesus deserves that place.

What's In It For Us?

1. When we give up all in order to purchase the pearl, what do we get in return? "When we thus give ourselves _____ to Him, Christ, with all the _____ of heaven, gives _____ to us. We obtain the _____ of great price" (COL 116)
2. According to Jesus, what do we gain when we are willing to give up all we have for His sake? "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that _____ house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or _____, or wife, or children, or _____, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an _____ now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with _____; and in the world to come _____ life." (Mk. 10:29-30)
3. **Thought Question:** What do you suppose Jesus meant when he said that when we forsake all, we will have **now in this time** "houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and

children, and lands”? Was he saying that we will be materially rich now in this present world?

4. According to the apostle Paul, what do we receive as a result of Christ’s sacrifice? “He that spared not his own _____, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not _____ him also freely give us _____ things?” (Rom. 8:32)

Note: When we give Christ our all, He gives us His all. Purchasing the pearl is not to be seen as an expense but rather as an investment, and quite an investment at that!! Think of it. We give up all that we have that we might gain all that He has. Earlier in Romans 8 the apostle Paul has said that if we accept Jesus we become heirs with Him of all that which belongs to the Father! Instead of earthly possessions, family and friends, we gain heavenly treasures and become members of the heavenly family!!

The Second Meaning of the Parable

The Merchantman

1. What do the merchantman and the pearl represent in the second sense of the parable? “Christ, the heavenly _____ seeking goodly pearls, saw in _____ humanity the pearl of great price.” (COL 118)
2. Did Jesus need special spiritual discernment in order to see value in fallen humanity? “In man, defiled and _____ by sin, He [Jesus] saw the _____ of redemption.” (COL 118)

The Pearl’s Value

3. How does the Father look upon sinful humanity? “God looked upon humanity; not as vile and _____; He looked upon it in _____, saw it as it might become through _____ love.” (COL 118)
4. How much was heaven willing to invest in order to purchase lost humanity? “He [Jesus] collected all the riches of the _____, and laid them down in order to _____ the pearl. And Jesus, having found it, _____ it in His own diadem.” (COL 118)

Note: Ellen White had much to say about the value of a soul. Notice the following statement: “So great is the value of the human soul that Christ paid an infinite price for the redemption of the race. God gave His Son up to shame and reproach and to an ignominious death that man might have eternal life.” (Manuscript 24, 1903)

In another remarkable statement, Ellen White explains how much the Father was willing to

give for our redemption: “The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption.” (Steps to Christ, p. 21)

5. What two Old Testament texts does Ellen White quote to illustrate the value of Christ’s redeemed children? _____ (COL 118)

The Pearl and Suffering

6. How does redeemed humanity become “pearly white”? “These are they which came out of great _____, and have washed their _____, and made them white in the _____ of the lamb.” (Rev. 7:14)

Note: There is no natural beauty in ourselves. But as we are covered with the spotless robes of Christ’s righteousness, God looks upon us as if we had never sinned and we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). We need not be concerned about what the Father thinks of us but rather what the Father thinks of Jesus, our substitute.

5. What is the only way in which we can enter the kingdom of God? Paul says that “we must through much _____ enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)
6. What are the gates of the holy city composed of? “And the twelve gates were twelve _____; every gate was of one _____.” (Rev. 22:21)

Note: It is probably no coincidence that God’s people will enter the holy city through gates of pearl. As we have previously seen, pearls are formed as the result of an irritant. God’s people will enter through the gates into the city after great tribulation.

Sharing the Pearl

1. At what time do people particularly seek the pearl of great price? “The time of the Holy Spirit’s _____ is the time when in a _____ sense the heavenly gift is sought and found.” (COL 119)
2. On what past occasion was the heavenly gift sought and found in a special sense? “But after Christ’s _____ His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” (COL 120)
3. What became the passion of those who had purchased the priceless pearl? “On interest prevailed. One object _____ up all others. All hearts beat in _____. The only ambition of believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s

_____, and to labor for the enlargement of His _____.”
(COL 120-121)