

"Pearl of Great Price"

Is there anything so valuable to you that you would sell everything you own to possess it? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. This is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to see how valuable Jesus holds His kingdom, that is the church, to be. So, stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's will. The gospel of Jesus Christ is God's means of reaching lost souls. Romans 1:16 says that "the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." The Bible gives us great reason to believe in Jesus as the Christ and to love the God who created and sustains us each day. If you believe and you love the Lord, you'll want to obey Him and live for Him all your life. Thanks for taking time with us today; we want to be part of your life each week.

Years ago my mother gave Jackie and me a precious treasure that she made with her own hands, a beautiful quilt made from silks and satins. It has bright colors—red, blue, green, gold, pink and purple. Each stitch, she said, was made with love. I treasure that quilt, not only for its own beauty, but even more so because she made it. You see, I treasure her. Her quilt is valuable in its own right for the materials and the hours that she put into it, but that's not why it's so valuable. To me, it's priceless, an irreplaceable heirloom, made with love.

The Lord too has given us great treasures in Jesus Christ; they're given in love. We have the forgiveness of sin, eternal life, the peace that passes understanding, a home in heaven, the joy of our salvation, and the Word of God to guide us each day. God's treasures are priceless, because they affect our souls and they are everlasting. These treasures are available to us, but we must be willing to sacrifice other things in order to possess them. What we give up is hardly worth anything compared to what we gain in Christ. We must take advantage of the opportunity to follow Jesus.

We love Bible study, so we offer the information about the pearl of great price free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 13:44 to 46, and explore the pearl of great price.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 13 verses 44 to 46. Here Jesus, in two very brief parables, presents the value of the kingdom of heaven.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from 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 fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

That's how valuable the kingdom of heaven truly is. Let's pray together. Oh Father, we are so grateful that You allow us to be a part of Your kingdom. That we can be members of Your body, the church. And Father help us to put the great value on it that Your Son has put upon it by purchasing it with His own blood. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

There are many kinds of treasures. Some are valuable monetarily; some are valuable to the heart; but I want to talk about the treasures of the soul. These treasures that last beyond this life; they're eternal. The treasures of the soul are the real treasures. If you possess them, you have everything. Without them, you have nothing that will last.

First, I believe God, himself, is a treasure. Having a relationship with God is the greatest of treasures. God is our Creator, Savior, our sustainer, our hope, and our life. God loves us, hears our prayers, provides for us, and guides us. Isaiah said in Isaiah 33:5 to 6, "The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is Zion's treasure." I tell you it matters that the Lord God, the one you read about in your Bible, is your God. If money is your god, you'll be disappointed, because you can never get enough of it. Solomon said in Proverbs 15:16, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it. If pleasure is your god, you'll tire of it. If work is your god, what will you do when you get too old to work? The only God of any value is the God who will not perish, the One who is above this physical world—the God of heaven, the God of the Bible—Jehovah God. God is so good to us all.

Second, Christ is a treasure. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:1 to 3, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen (my face a) seen me face to face (rather), that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." There is nothing, my friend, more precious, more spiritual, wiser, purer, or more loving than simple New Testament Christianity. We're thankful God for Jesus as our Lord and Savior. He is indeed the Christ, the Messiah, who brought life and truth and salvation to this world. We may easily say that in Christ we have "A love that can never be fathomed; A life that can never die; A righteousness that can never be tarnished; A peace that can never be understood; A rest that can never be disturbed; A joy that can never be diminished; A hope that can never be disappointed; A glory that can never be clouded; A happiness that can never be interrupted; A light that can never be darkened; A strength that can never be enfeebled; A beauty that can never be marred; A purity that can never be defiled; A wisdom that can never be baffled; (oh I tell you we have) resources that can never be exhausted (in Christ)."

No wonder the apostle Paul, though he was a respected Jew, gave it all up for Jesus Christ. He was indeed a blue blood, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee, a persecutor of the church, blameless, and respected. However, he said in Philippians 3 verses 7 to 8, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ." To Paul nothing was more important than knowing Christ.

Christ was on his heart and his mind day and night. He said in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." Paul gladly sacrificed himself for the cause of Christ. He didn't count his life as dear to himself, if he could but fulfill the ministry to preach the gospel (Acts 20 verse 24). He said in 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 2, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That was the focus of his life—it was his treasure! I hope that it's also yours. I know that I can't live without the Lord Jesus in my life.

Third, heaven is a treasure. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19 to 21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up

for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” We live only a short time on this earth, and we must prepare for the time when we cross beyond this life. We must treasure our eternal home. What treasures are you laying up in heaven? They won’t be earthly treasures, but they’ll be heavenly. Perhaps it’s a friend whom you’ve converted to Christ. Perhaps it’s a gift that you gave to the Lord to bless others. You know it’s only what you give to God that survives this life. Everything else will perish. Your life here is just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Don’t waste your life today by failing to prepare for eternity.

The Lord Jesus told this parable in Luke 12:16 to 21, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” My friend, you may think you have all the right strings to pull, but there is one that never belongs to you—and that’s the string to your soul. You’ll either spend eternity with God or without Him. What are you doing with your life?

Fourth, the Word of God is a treasure. Solomon said in Proverbs 2:1 to 6, “My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.” Solomon spends nearly ten chapters of the book of Proverbs trying to get his son’s attention. He wants his son to hear what he has to say, because he realizes what a treasure the truth is.

Solomon said in Proverbs 23:23, “Buy the truth, and do not sell it; get wisdom and instruction and understanding.” Truth is available to all, but it’s not cheap. You have to search it out of the pages of the Bible. And the more you study, the greater treasure you’ll find there. Many people are spiritually impoverished, because they’ve never studied the Word of God. They’re willing to accept whatever they hear from others, never questioning. If someone tells you a lie, and you believe it, you’ve missed the truth and the wisdom it brings. Acts 17 verse 11 says that the Bereans “were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” I hope you are also examining the Scriptures.

David said in Psalm 119 verse 11, “Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.” The Word of God treasured up, cherished, has great ability to help us in time of temptation. In Matthew chapter 4, when the devil tempted Jesus, the Lord answered every challenge with a quotation from the Word of God. He boldly told Satan, “It is written.” It is written might be better stated or translated, “It stands written.” God wrote it, and it’s still authoritative, and it’s still true, and still teaches us how to live. The Lord Jesus said, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4 and verse 4). The word of God makes us alive, and it will last. Everybody is interested in things that last. The Lord said in Matthew 6:19 to 20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Fifth, the church is a treasure. Some people ignore or put down the church, but how these people think and how Christ thinks are two different things. The church is the Lord's treasure. He treasures the church more than we can imagine. The church, now, is not a building but people. And God treasures every member of His church. Peter said to the church in 1 Peter 2:9 to 10, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

God sees in the church a people for his own possession. They are precious, chosen, cherished, and beloved. He considers every member of the church a royal priest, called out of the darkness of this world and called into His marvelous light. The church is His means of telling the world about the excellencies of God and of His Christ. God treasures His people, and you can tell how much He values her by what He is willing to give for the church.

Acts 20:28 simply says that Christ purchased the church with His own blood. Christ gave up everything for the church. God can manufacture gold and silver very easily. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Things don't matter to God, but the blood Jesus is something else. The Lord poured out His blood for the church. We should treasure the things that Jesus treasures and love the church the way Jesus loves it.

The Lord Jesus taught in Matthew 13:44 to 46, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from 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 fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Hidden treasures today are rare. In the ancient biblical lands, however, they were common. Israel, which was a land bridge between Egypt and the East, was repeatedly invaded, ravaged, and captured. To protect themselves, people hid treasure in the ground, in walls, in tree trunks, or wherever they could. On some occasions they died or were captured, and no one knew where the treasure was hidden.

Now these parables are talking about the kingdom, which is the church. I hope you have found the kingdom of God in one of churches of Christ near you. Become a part of a local church and treasure it. Oh, I know that the church isn't perfect; but it is divine in origin. And when the church lives the way God intended it to live, there's nothing in all the world better and more noble than the church of the Lord. And I want everyone to be a member of the Lord's church.

Let's pray together. Oh Father, we're thankful for all the treasures that You've given to us. Help us to see their value and their importance and to love You and to love others. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:20 to 21, "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What matters to you? What are your treasures? I hope that God, Christ, heaven, the Word, and the church are your treasures. I hope you've obeyed the gospel and have received the priceless grace of God.

But let me ask, "How much do you treasure the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of your sins, or the grace of God? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain." Paul didn't want a gift so great as the grace of God to be taken lightly or thrown aside. He wanted God's grace to matter in how he lived and what he did. Do you?

Are you putting Christ first in your life? Would you give up everything to know Him? Are you worshipping with the church? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying regularly? Have you obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ? You can do that by believing in Jesus, repenting of your sins, confessing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by being baptized into Christ. Now, when you are baptized upon the confession of your faith and your repentance, the Lord will wash away your sins and add you to His church. There is never a better time, never a better time, to obey the Lord than today. Today. Tomorrow may be too late. Don't wait another day to put your life in order. Treasure up God in your soul. Cherish the Lord Jesus, and live a life that honors and pleases Him.

We hope today's study about putting your soul in order and about cherishing the Lord Jesus and His church has stirred your heart. And if you want a printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

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If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Churches of Christ love and want guest. And you'll be glad that you became a part of the church family. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about our program. Let em know that you watch. And as always God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.