

GOODLY PEARLS!

Mt. 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly *[fine]* pearls: **46** Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

The word translated ‘merchant’ describes someone who travels over land and sea to expand his trade. He did not trade locally or merely to ‘make ends meet’. Instead, he was a focussed businessman intent on achieving nothing less than the most perfect gems. ... In this parable there is more than money involved for the merchant has already accumulated wealth, after all, he *is* a merchant ... but this is something greater to which he aspires. ...

He is **SEEKING** ... and he knows what he is seeking for, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls. ... His heart was like an open book before the Lord, and God knew exactly the priority of this man was to find the ‘goodly pearls’, - the most beautiful, precious, most excellent, surpassing all others, the top of the range. ... Not for him was anything less.

As a merchant, he fully appreciated he had to search diligently, - far and wide, - for this treasure. He was not expecting to ‘stumble over’ it by accident, or neither was someone simply going to hand it to him. This man knew to find ‘goodly pearls’, he had to be actively looking, - *seeking*, - ... not just for pearls, but for *goodly* pearls. ... This was the kind of person Jesus was speaking about.

In 2006, a Philippine fisherman recovered a single pearl, one foot wide and slightly over two feet long. ... Those waters are teeming with clams containing pearls which are sold to tourists and larger companies. ... He kept this particular pearl though, as a good luck charm until one day he discovered its worth, - was *100 million dollars* ... a pearl of greatest price! ... He was out looking for *many* ‘goodly pearls’ but his search

produced more than he could ever have imagined. ... And that was like the merchant in Jesus' parable.

It is how many people search through life for the elusive 'something' they crave. Many hope to find it in a lottery ticket, or a 'lucky' break to propel them into a future of success, wealth, and fame. Sometimes, even, they come to church looking for that elusive 'something' ... and they are not sure what exactly they are looking for, but they hope a religion may provide it.

This man would not quit until he made his discovery. All his energies were occupied with his aspiration. He went to sleep thinking of pearls, he dreamt about them, he found out all he could about them, he got up the next morning with the thought in his mind, "this could be the day when I find them!"

He was aiming high ... You cannot imagine him going to the market stalls for he was looking for pearls which were away beyond the price of anything second-hand, - he was not looking for 'cast-off's'. If someone would have presented him with pearls, he would examine them carefully ... but he wasn't simply looking for *pearls*, he was looking for *goodly pearls*.

But, while we say this, in *seeking goodly pearls* he was nevertheless aiming lower than he should have been, - maybe he did not know he *should* have been aiming higher. ... He was searching for *goodly pearls*, - *plural*. In other words, he reckoned the more pearls you can find, the richer the prize. He had no concept of how *one precious* pearl could out-do *many* pearls. ... While he was aiming high, he should have been aiming higher! ... That is how many people are. They want something for the 'here and now' because they have no understanding about what comes in eternity. They are prepared to stop, instead of continuing until they discover the

relationship with Jesus Christ as Saviour, Master and Friend, not only for our time on this earth, but also forever.

God never sent His Son into this world for people to stop short at anything other than the best. ... We often go so far, but don't push that extra mile where God has even more to give from out of His storehouse. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20). ... We cannot come close to understanding the depths of the riches He has for all those who trust in His Son.

Here we meet a merchant man, **seeking** goodly pearls. Then we find him **SUCCESSFUL**, ⁴⁶ Who, *when he had found* one pearl of great price. He had been everywhere ... No matter who he talked to, it was about pearls. Whatever town or city he was in he was looking to find them. Then one day he found *it!* He found more than he could ever have dreamt of finding for he found the most beautiful, the most natural pearl.

And the Lord Jesus used this picture to describe those who come to a saving knowledge of God through Him. ... Two were travelling along a road outside of Jerusalem. They were trusting in a 'treasure' they thought had been stolen from them and they believed it was impossible to get it back. While it was in their possession, it was the most precious 'treasure'. All their hopes for the future were in this 'treasure'. This 'treasure' was promised to open out for them a life beyond their greatest and grandest aspirations. Yes, they thought it had gone ... but the discovery they were privileged to realise was the One Who walked with them on the road to Emmaus was no less than the Son of God, - the 'treasure', the 'Pearl of Greatest Price' ... and their testimony was this, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Lk. 24:32)

Many seek for quantity, when what they *really* need is the ‘quality’ which can only be found in the Best! Here, this merchant found all he was seeking in one precious pearl! The value of the pearl was priceless ... and that is why we are not told how much it cost. Now, though, it belonged to the merchant who had spent his time and effort seeking for it. ... And its value was worth everything he had earlier owned for he gave all his previous possessions away. He realised he must have it for the rest of his life. He sold all the other pearls he had accumulated because this **one pearl of great price** was his prized possession.

As a Christian, your most prized possession is your faith in the Lord Jesus. Every other possession you will one day be parted from ... but not the **one pearl of great price** for it, - your salvation, - can never be exchanged and it never loses its value. It can never be taken from you. *You* have never paid for it, - it has been given to you freely, at the cost of the Son of God, **Rom. 8:32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ... God will deprive none of His Gift who comes to Him by faith, trusting in Christ alone for salvation. ... **Seeking ... Succeeding ...**

SELLING ... On finding the pearl of greatest price, this merchant man went and sold all that he had. We are not told what he sold to obtain this **pearl of great price** ... but whatever he had he was left with nothing else but the pearl he had discovered. Away went his other possessions. No matter how precious and cherished they were, they did not compare to the **pearl of great price**.

Most likely, some of his friends thought he was foolish, - “Don’t take a chance! Keep some behind in case you want to go back to them”. ... No, the merchant did not think like that. He *must* have that pearl, at the cost of everything he owned. That was the pearl he would never be parted from!

While, on one hand, salvation is free ... it is also more costly because it requires you to give up all those other things you had in the place where your salvation now resides. The old ways and the new way cannot live together, - it is either one or the other, but not both for when you are a Christian, old things are passed away ..., all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17). ... And again, that was what the merchant did ... **seeking** goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price [*succeeding*], went and sold all that he had [*selling*]. ... He made it his own. He **SECURED** it. Only a fool would have missed the opportunity. ... Jesus spoke about another man elsewhere who owned his business, and it was going great. It seemed as if everything he touched turned to money ... and plenty of it! What he had was not enough though, and he wanted much more. He decided he would pull down what he already owned, and he would build greater. He would be the envy of his neighbours and his fellow-businessmen. ... And then one night he went to his bedroom, - beautiful, comfortable, with all the pleasures he had ever dreamed off. He lay down in his bed to sleep and looked forward to the next day when he would start to put even greater plans into operation.

That night, though, an unexpected voice spoke, ... and the voice said, **Lk. 12:20** Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? **21** So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. ... Elsewhere Jesus said, **Mk. 8:36** what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? **37** Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

What a great joy for this merchant to find that **pearl of greatest price**! If he had passed up on the opportunity to purchase it, he would have regretted it the rest of his life. It had to be an immediate purchase. It had to be received before the offer might no longer be available ... and the merchant availed himself of it straightaway. Some people reckon they

can believe in Christ when it suits them but that is not the case, **Is. 55:6** Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near ... **II Cor. 6:2** behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ... It might not be here tomorrow ... **behold, now ...!**

Just imagine the twinkle in his eye when he held that **pearl of great price** in his hand. Think of the smile as he showed it to his friends, “O happy day, that fixed my choice On Thee, my Saviour and my God! Well may this glowing heart rejoice, And tell its raptures all abroad.” The man was now worth far more than his little mind could ever have perceived. Instead of owning many **goodly pearls**, he had found *the* **pearl of great price**.

And lastly, this was a *final*, - a **STUNNING** and a **SUPREME**, - purchase. There was none better than this for notice what is at the end of this verse ... a *full stop*. ... The merchant had no need to look elsewhere. His life’s search was over.

The experts tell us single, natural pearls are worth an absolute fortune on their own. In 1917, the jeweller Pierre Cartier purchased the Fifth Avenue mansion that is now the New York Cartier store in exchange for a matched, double strand of natural pearls that he had been collecting for years. *He had made it in terms of this world’s wealth!*

But, in this parable, the Lord Jesus tells us about a man who had far a greater wealth he would never lose ... not even death could rob him off it.

Seeking, succeeding, selling, securing ... and yes, **satisfying, secured, stunning, supreme** ... **superior** in every way to all else ... Such is our salvation, - matchless and incomparable is what we are privileged with in our Lord Jesus Christ. This merchant would not trade his one pearl for a thousand lesser pearls ... **I Peter 2:7** Unto you therefore which believe he is

precious ... **II Cor. 4:7** we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

This is the treasure which is yours when you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. ... Keep on keeping it in the place of highest display that others would see and want it too ... **Mt. 13:45** the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: **46** Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found, and found in Thee alone,
The peace, the joy I sought so long, the bliss till now unknown. ...
Now none but Christ can satisfy, None other Name for me.