

The *first two* parables Jesus gives in the parables of Matthew 13 reveal the *beginning* of the kingdom of heaven (or "*Kingdom of God*"). Parables *three* and *four* reveal the corruption that will affect His Kingdom down through the ages. Parables five and six disclose two precious accomplishments of Christ's Kingdom.

In the seven Kingdom parables, Jesus presents a whole panorama of the church's existence, its continuance, and its survival from start to finish. To obtain a clear comprehension of what God desires to accomplish in our life we must keep in mind the chronological order of these Kingdom parables. Jesus gives seven parables, revealing His "*word of the Kingdom.*"

In the first parables Jesus tells how He would sow the "*good seed*" of the word of the kingdom in the hearts of His believers. He discloses that there would be four possible responses:

- (1) The Hard Heart -- those who would refuse to take the effort and time to learn the words of the Kingdom and therefore the seed cannot take root.
- (2) The Shallow Heart -- those attempting to exist on emotions, living by feelings and when trouble times arrive the seeds will not grow.
- (3) The Half Hearted -- those whose life is full of weeds -- that Jesus calls "*the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things,*" crowd out the seed of the word of the Kingdom that it will not grow
- (4) The Whole Hearted -- those who fully accept the "*word of the Kingdom*" and produces -- some 30 fold, some 60 fold, and some 100 fold

That's the first parable!

In the Second parable Jesus reveals that there would be trouble for the church -- as Satan "*over-sows*" the believer's heart with "*look-alike*" wheat; to crowd out the good seed.

The third parable reveals the *professing* church will grow into something huge -- a *monstrosity*, all out of proportion to God's original intention, revealing the *outward* danger the church would face.

In the fourth parable Jesus reveals the *inward* danger the church would face -- false doctrine being introduced into the truth of God's Word.

The fifth parable reveals that God finds a precious treasure (Israel) and He hides it for a season -- to be rediscovered later

We come to the sixth parable -- Christ reveals His church, as a "*pearl of great price.*"

Christ's purpose in establishing His Kingdom



Israel



Church

6. THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE!

Matthew 13:45-46, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for *fine* — [other translations render this, "goodly, beautiful, choice, or rare] — *pearls*. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

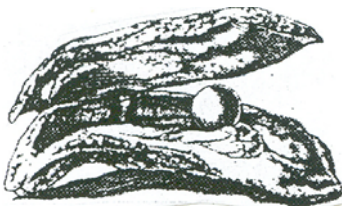
This sixth parable is probably the best known and yet, the most misunderstood or wrongly interpreted than any of the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven.

A grasp of the seven lessons taught by these seven parables will enable the student to live under Christ's reign and rule, and keep him from being caught in the throes of misrepresentations of Christian living that are so common in our day.

A general conception, commonly advanced -- [that is a misconception] -- is that: "Christianity is likened unto one who earnestly desires and diligently seeks salvation, as a result of his efforts, he is rewarded by finding Christ, 'The Pearl of Great Price' He then, forsakes all and follows Him!"



THE OBJECTIONS TO THIS THEORY ARE:



1. The sinner does not "*earnestly and diligently seek salvation - the Lord seeks him!*"
2. The sinner cannot "*sell anything to buy salvation.*"
He has nothing to sell and, anyhow, salvation cannot be purchased.
3. This man in the parable "*buys the one pearl of great price.*"

The 'Pearl' cannot picture Salvation or Jesus Christ

Can any sinner "*buy*" Christ?

THE "**PEARL OF GREAT PRICE**" IS NOT JESUS CHRIST - NOR SALVATION,
- FOR NEITHER CAN BE PURCHASED!

Throughout these seven parables the "*Man*" referred to is Christ Jesus, therefore, it is only logical to conclude that the "*Man*" in this sixth parable (the Pearl of Great Price) is, also, Jesus Christ, seeing He is the "*Man*" in all of the other parables!

What did Jesus say this "*Pearl of Great Price*" is likened unto?
Jesus said, "*It is likened unto the kingdom of heaven.*"

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

1. This "Merchant Man" desired this "pearl of great price."

As one reads the New Testament, he is made to realize that what Jesus Christ desires more than anything else is to rule and reign in the believer's heart and life. He desires for believers to be submissive to His will and authority! Nothing comes through more clearly than this in the New Testament.

2. This Merchant Man regards this pearl as being of "great price."

There is not a more staggering thought in the entire Bible than, not only that Jesus *desire* us, but also that we should be of "*great price*" to Him.

3. This Merchant Man "sold all that He had to gain this pearl of great price."

"*He sold all that He had,*" are words that are easily uttered, but our minds are incapable of ever understanding all that they imply. 2 Corinthians 8:9 teaches, "*Jesus Christ, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*"

4. This Merchant Man "sought the pearl."

No one could ever enlarge upon Peter's teaching in 1 Peter 1:18-19, which states, "*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed . . . but with the precious blood of Christ.*"

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE "PEARL" ITSELF

1. The "*pearl*" was the object of the greatest value to the Merchant Man (Jesus Christ)
2. The pearl is the only gem that is a product of a "*living creature.*"

The kingdom of God is something that is **ALIVE** within the believer's heart.

What a wonderful picture of Christ's kingdom at work within the believer!

Down in the ocean's depths lives a small animal encased in a shell, we call it an "*oyster!*" A foreign substance, such as a grain of sand intrudes into the oyster's shell, causing the oyster to give off a substance called "*nacre*" and covers whatever it is that causes the wound. The oyster repeats this process again and again, one layer after another of that nacre is cast out by that little oyster, until ultimately there is built up a priceless pearl!

3. A pearl is a product of "*suffering.*"

The pearl is the answer to the injury that was inflicted upon the oyster. It is the offending particle that ultimately becomes the object of beauty! The very object that injured the oyster becomes a precious gem!

Acts 14:22, "*We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*"

4. The pearl is formed "*slowly and gradually.*"

The pearl does not come into existence in a single day. There is a tedious process of waiting while the pearl is being slowly, but surely, formed, and, although, salvation is instant, the process of the formation of kingdom living... [The reign and rule of Christ Jesus in the believer's life, by the power and grace of God]...takes a lifetime!

5. The pearl has a "*lowly origin.*"

A beautiful pearl, originally had its home in the depths of the sea, amid the mire and filth, because that is where the oyster congregates. The oyster is a scavenger of the ocean.

This lowly origin of the pearl reminds us of our humble beginning, who, but by the grace of God, are by nature creatures of the filth and mire and ruin of Adam's fall (See Ephesians 2:11-12).

6. The pearl is formed "*secretly,*" down in the ocean's depths.

The process of God's kingdom, Christ ruling our hearts, is often unseen by the eye of man, secretly taking place within our life.

7. The pearl is an object selected for honor and exalted future.

That object in the ocean's depths, unseen by the eye of man, is gradually built up until ultimately it has a position of importance, such as the diadem of a king's crown. It becomes a jewel of royalty; *it was made for this!*

This is what God wants to accomplish, by the power of the Holy Spirit working out the kingdom of heaven, Christ ruling and reigning in every area of the believer's life.

Just as the pearl of "*The Pearl of Great Price*" had a lowly origin, and ultimately gained a position of dignity, honor and glory, so God will take the believer's character and disposition and work out something beautiful for His glory, *if* the believer will let Him accomplish this in his life.

8. A pearl is the result of the full attention of the oyster.

The oyster seeks to ease the irritation of the foreign substance by throwing off a secretion that forms over the sore and irritated spot. The oyster becomes weaker and weaker as it puts off this secretion, however, this all adds to the formation of the "*pearl.*" The pearl is made; or perfected, through the lingering, torturous, suffering *death* of the oyster.

What makes the beautiful pearl seem so blue-white, is this layer upon layer of the substance put off by the oyster during this process of irritation.

What a beautiful picture of what God is seeking to accomplish in our lives during times of "*irritation*."

Whenever experiences of difficulty or hardship come into the believer's life, he can respond in one of two ways: (1) he can either re-act in his own self, doing what he thinks is best for him, or, (2) he can submit to Christ's reign in his life and do what God wants done.

Should a grain of sand intrude into the eye, it would bring infection if not taken care of, maybe even the loss of sight, because of the reaction of the human eye. Its very nature is to protect itself, to rid itself of any foreign element that is distasteful or irritating to it. However, should that same grain of sand enters an oyster, instead of rejecting it, the oyster produces a concretion. The oyster does not re-act, but it acts! It accepts the irritation! That offending particle ultimately becomes a thing of great beauty - a pearl of great price.

REMEMBER,
IT IS NOT THE SOURCE OF IRRITATION
THAT PRODUCES THE HARM,
BUT THE ACTION, OR RE-ACTION
OF THE SUBJECT INVOLVED!

God is far more interested, not in what happens to us, but what our attitudes and actions are to what happens to us!