

God's Precious Church

Matt 13:45-46

45 Again, 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.

Intro: Typically, people approach this parable by saying that the pearl is salvation and that the buyer is the lost sinner. He does all that he can to obtain salvation. He works and he pays any price to get his soul saved. However, the real interpretation of the parable is this: The merchant is Jesus, the pearl is the church and the great price is the death of Jesus on the cross. It is God who is willing to pay any price to save a people from a death in Hell.

There are many lessons from nature given in the Bible drawn from nature. Among them are the ant, the bee, the eagle, the rooster and Balaam's donkey. Tonight, we will take a look at the little pearl. In doing so, we can learn a lot about the Lord and His church. Notice several lessons from the pearl.

I. IT IS THE PRODUCT OF SUFFERING

A. A pearl is formed when an oyster gets a grain of sand trapped in the soft flesh inside it's shell. This piece of sand irritates the tender oyster and it responds by coating the grain of sand with layer upon layer of saliva and calcium. The pearl is the product of pain.

B. The church of Jesus Christ was formed from the sufferings of Jesus upon the cross! (Ill. The horrible death He bore for sinners!)

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

II. IT IS FORMED FROM SOMETHING WORTHLESS

A. The pearl is formed from all types of junk. Pieces of sand, bone fragments from dead fish, etc.

B. The church of Jesus is formed of old hell bound sinners (Ill. The kind of junk we were ...

Eph 2:1-3

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

III. **IT IS A COMPOSITE**

A. III. There are at least three materials used in the formation of the pearl. These are, the offending material, saliva, and calcium.

B. The Church is composed of all kinds of people from varying backgrounds - Rev. 22:17; John 3:16. Often, there is only one thing in common - Salvation through the blood of Jesus!

IV. **IT GROWS GRADUALLY**

A. After the grain of sand lands inside the oyster, it can take the creature up to 3 years to produce the pearl.

B. God has been gradually building His church in the world. It has been growing for 2,000 years, but only as the Holy Spirit has convicted and saved sinners - John 6:44.

V. **IT IS A HIDDEN WORK**

A. The pearl grows hidden inside the oyster under the water.

B. No one can actually see the growth of the Lord's church. They can see the visible church, but not the invisible. It is a matter of the heart. In truth, one can be certain of no one else, but themselves.

VI. **IT IS A VALUABLE OBJECT**

A. Pearls can be worth fortunes. In fact strings of pearls can actually be worth millions of dollars.

B. The church was worth a fortune to God! He paid a high price to save the church from Hell: The death of His Son! (III. Rom. 5:6-8)

C. The church is worth a fortune to the world. She serves as a restraining force against the tide of evil that will one day sweep over all the world. Therefore, the church is worth any price that we might have to pay to keep her active and to keep her strong. It is worth our praying, our giving, our working, our sacrificing. The church is worth all we can give to her.

VII. IT IS A UNITY

A. The pearl is the only gem known to man that cannot be cut. Large diamonds are cut and made into smaller, more valuable stones, but the pearl cannot be divided. To do so destroys all of its worth.

B. The visible church may be divided in the eyes of man, but the true church of Jesus will ever stand together - Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 1:10.

(III. When any church is divided, it loses its value to the world! Therefore, there is a great need for us to be of one mind and of one accord! It doesn't look good on Jesus when His people cannot get along!)

VII. IT REFLECTS LIGHT

A. One of the outstanding qualities of the pearl is its ability to reflect light.

B. The church, like the moon in the heavens, is to reflect the light of the Lord Jesus - Matt. 5:16.

IX. IT IS A THING OF GREAT BEAUTY

A. Pearls have been used for centuries as a thing to adorn. They serve as objects of great beauty.

B. The church is a beautiful thing! A collection of sinners saved by the great grace of God and headed to a city called heaven. (III. Right now, our true beauty might not shine as it ought to, but one day it will - Rev. 21:9ff; 2 Cor. 11:2. (III. 1 John 3:1-3)

Conc: There is more that could be said. We could talk of it being round which speaks of the eternal nature of the church. Of there only being one pearl to an oyster. There is only one true church. Of it being white, that is pure - Eph. 5:29. However, the greatest question that we face tonight is this - "What will you do with Jesus?"