



Holy Ambition

Matthew 13:45-46 KJV 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.

I. INTRODUCTION -- A HOLY AMBITION

Arnold Bennett -- You wake up in the morning, and lo! your purse is magically filled with twenty-four hours—the most precious of possessions.

Anonymous -- The good things of life have to be paid for in advance while the evil things we do are paid for, generally, on an installment plan.

-This parable is one of the Kingdom parables that the Lord used to illustrate to us not only the power of His Kingdom but also the price of His Kingdom. It literally will cost everything that a man has.

-Every good thing that we come by in life will have to be paid for.

- A good marriage.
- A home that is peaceful.
- Friendships that really matter.
- An education to help us to help others.
- The honor and respect of others.
- Spiritual things such as a prayer life and an understanding of the Word.

-All of these things demand our attention and they will require that we pay a price for them. Some of the greatest tragedies of life come from the demands that evil and sin makes on men. One way or another one of the principles of life is that we will have to at some point pay for the things that we want in life.

-Some think that they can shirk their responsibility and not pay but in the end they usually discover that they did indeed have to pay. Others very early on in life realize and understand that they can “pay now and play later.”

Cronin, A. J. -- The virtue of all achievement is victory over oneself. Those who know this victory can never know defeat.

-There should be a holy ambition to seize us in our walk with God.

II. THE TRAGEDY OF EVIL

-Scattered throughout the Bible are men who could not bring themselves to pay what the price tags called for or either those who thought they would not have to pay for their misdeeds.

A. The Rich Young Ruler

-The Lord found one day a young man who watched Him as He was blessing some children who had surrounded Him. The young man noted the warmth and the kindness that came from the Lord and determined to approach Him with a question.

Luke 18:18 KJV And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

-This young man was looking for something that was good. What could be more important than eternal life? It was a desirable thing to have. But when the Master told him what the price would be the young ruler went away very sorrowful because he felt the price tag was too high.

-There are price tags on everything in life. We have to pay for what we get. The Lord clearly stated that life is almost like a vast market place, a huge mall, or even a place that we bid for stocks and that we will have to buy what we want.

B. David

-There is a price for the sin that we give ourselves to in this life. David had to submit to a devastating price tag for the crime he committed with Bathsheba and Uriah. The first installment came when he was confronted by Nathan, the prophet.

-Nathan confronted him with a horrible story about a lamb that belonged to a poor man. The lamb was taken from this poor man and used to feed a wanderer, a traveling man, a wayfaring man who traipsed through the country side. The rich man had no idea the price that would come from his crime.

-David was inflamed with indignation and he thundered at Nathan, "You show me the man! Show me this villain and I will punish him!" Nathan pointed his finger at David and it would be almost as if lightning struck from his fingertip, blistering, scorching words came from the prophet, "You. . . You. . . You, David, are the man!"

-David's conscience then revived and he began to tremble with sorrow. The first installment began to demand its toll.

-It was not too long before the second installment for his sin started calling. Amnon, one of his sons, horribly violated and raped his half-sister, Tamar. The family was torn in a thousand directions. Tamar suffered, David suffered, there was no one in the royal family spared from the pain this sin caused.

-Then the third installment started clamoring. This time it involved his favorite son, Absalom, who determined that he would avenge the sin against his sister, Tamar. At a party, Absalom murdered Amnon and again David and his family was sent reeling through a funeral, sorrow, and great pain.

-But the demands of the installment plan kept on coming. Absalom returned from his exile back to the kingdom and found some sympathizers who crowned him. Absalom began his march on the palace and the Bible tells that David had to flee in the night.

-In the midst of all of this another installment came that David had to pay, one of his old servants cursed him and threw dirt on him. David's weary heart and depressed mind sank lower and lower due to the demands of the price tag of sin.

-But it was not yet complete another payment was demanded when the runners came with the news that Absalom was buried under a pile of rocks with his body full of arrows. David lived the rest of his life with the price tags calling.

C. Haman

-With David the payment plan was throughout his entire life. For Haman the installments were close together.

-Haman allowed himself to get cranked over about a gatekeeper named Mordecai. Mordecai would not bow down to him when Haman came through the gates every day. Haman let this chew on him until it led to his own destruction.

-He planned to have all the Jews in the Kingdom put to death and then he built a scaffolding 75 feet high for Mordecai. What Haman did not anticipate was the price he would have to pay.

-When the first summons for payment came, King Ahasuerus found out that Mordecai had once saved his life and he instructed Haman to dress him in royal robes, put the crown on his head, place the royal scepter in his hand, put him on the king's white stallion, and then lead him through the city in a parade of honor.

-The second summons for payment came almost immediately. The king discovered Haman's wicked plan and ordered for him to be hanged on his gallows that he had built.

D. Cain

-The payment plan can be strung out over years as with David, it can be demanded rapidly as with Haman, and

sometimes the plan is not so dramatically played out.

-There are times that the suffering and duress of mind is never known to the rest of the world but the still small voice of the conscience whips us, badgers us, and burns us until we utter the same cry as Cain did, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

III. THE INVESTMENT OF GOOD

-There are price tags for sin but there are also price tags that are on the good things in life. You cannot so much look at them as prices to be paid but rather investments that matter.

-The pearl of great price that we read about is exactly that. The man was willing to give everything he had to gain this pearl. The cost was not nearly as important to him as to what the return on his investment would be.

-It took focus, purpose, and discipline on his part to get the pearl.

Frederick the Great of Prussia was walking on the outskirts of Berlin when he encountered an old man walking in the opposite direction. "Who are you?" asked Frederick. "I am a king!" replied the old man. "A king!" laughed Frederick. "Over what kingdom do you rule?" "Over myself," was the prompt answer.

-This is the whole crux of the matter in paying the price. We all have to determine if we are willing to pursue and pay the price that is demanded of us. Whatever the pearl is, you will have to get control of the man who lives within.

- Many distracting things are removed from the path when we are given to holy ambition.
- Many of the inconsistent behaviors of hypocrisy are cut off when we are given to holy ambition.
- Obedience and discipline becomes a way of life when we are given to holy ambition.
- The hardships are weathered much easier when we are given to holy ambition.

-No man will ever be able to pay the price until he gets control of himself. When a man is foolish, he wants to conquer the world but he becomes wise when he determines to control himself.

A. The Price Is All

-Numerous times Jesus and the other writers of the Epistles emphasize over and over the investment of the Kingdom will require everything and it must be laid at the feet of Jesus.

- The rich young ruler must sell *all* and give to the poor.
- Peter and Andrew must leave *all* of their nets.
- Matthew must leave *all* the takings from his tax tables.
- Paul must leave *all* of his religious education, position, and pedigree behind to be in the Kingdom.

Matthew 22:37 KJV Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Deuteronomy 10:12 KJV And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

-There was a time that James and John wanted to sit on either side of Jesus when He came into His Kingdom. The answer to that is striking.

Matthew 20:22 KJV But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

-The fact of the matter is that Jesus was asking them if they could pay the price for what they were asking for. History bears out the fact that they did. James did a martyr and John was the only disciple that was not martyred but it was not because they did not try to kill him.

-This merchant man who sold everything to purchase the pearl had a heart with a single-minded focus. It required for

him to be given to thinking. We do little thinking in our day! Our minds are constantly under the assault of frivolous and superficial distractions.

-The pearl is worth all that you will pay for it, but I also know that once the pearl gets into your possession you become immediately aware that regardless of what was paid, it was well worth it.

B. Are You Willing To Pay?

-This is the great question of our lives: Are you willing to pay the price?

- Have you ever wondered why it is the men who are licensed with the United Pentecostal Church have to go through a process of examination?
- Have you ever considered why that we wait sometimes a long period of time before just allowing someone to get up and preach?
- Have you ever thought about why we have certain guidelines (some think demands) to teach Sunday School or get involved in serving in certain positions in this church?
- Has it ever occurred to you that time has a way of revealing all things?

-Character can only be observed over a long period of time. It takes years of right living, years of refusing to do evil things, years of sacrifice, and years of faithfulness to really determine if someone is willingly paying the price. The good things of life have to be paid for in advance.

C. What We Pay Will Help Us To Help Others

-If we are going to help the Lord build His Kingdom, we can only do it through helping others. It cost the Lord much pain for His Church.

Acts 20:28 KJV Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

- His back was lashed to ribbons.
- His head was stabbed with the crown of briars.
- His quivering hands and feet were pierced with huge spikes.
- He hung for six long hours in agony in front of a jeering crowd.

-How can anyone turn and refuse this plan of redemption?

-This redemption helped us and we must in turn help others. Helping others has a price tag on it too.

-Why is it that people make sacrifices? What is the real key to understanding such unselfishness? There is only one explanation for it. It's called "paying the price!"

IV. CONCLUSION -- THE REWARDS OF HOLY AMBITION

-Paul's idea of acceptable service was service which a man suppressed much within and overcame much without. Notice the pictures he uses:

- A warfare.
- A race.
- A struggle.
- A building up in one place and tearing down in another place.
- A mortifying battle.

- Forgetting the past.
- Reaching into the future.
- Striving.
- Pressing for the mark.

-All of these things suggest to us the thoughts of patient, persistent, and sometimes continuous work! There will be antagonizing forces to oppose, walls that will have to be scaled, mountains to be scaled, and raging rivers to be crossed.

-It is every day!

The words leaped from the journal at Joaquin Miller. "This day we sailed on." Day after day these words poured off the pages of the journal of Christopher Columbus. Storms ripped into the ships, the *Pinta* lost her rudder, and the men were threatening mutiny. Despair tugged at the heart and soul of Columbus. He was given to doubt and self-analysis and his conditions continued to worsen but Columbus had set his course and now there was nothing to do but to follow on with it. Through danger, darkness, hunger, panic, exhaustion *they sailed on!*

That phrase set the mind of Miller on fire. The roar of the sea in his ears, the sting of the spray on his cheeks, in his mind, he stood with Columbus and felt the perseverance and he set it down on paper. It immortalized Columbus because it taught what can happen when a man stays with the forces of ambition and he will pay the price.

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
 Behind the gates of Hercules;
 Before him not the ghost of shores,
 Before him only shoreless seas.
 The good Mate said, "Now we must pray,
 For lo! the very stars are gone.
 Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
 "Why say, 'Sail on! sail on! and on!"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
 My men grow ghastly wan and weak!"
 The stout Mate thought of home; a spray
 Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
 "What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
 If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
 "Why, you shall say at break of day,
 'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the Mate;
 "This mad sea shows its teeth tonight."
 He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
 With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
 "Brave Admiral, say but one good word;
 What shall we do when hope is gone?"
 The words leapt like a leaping sword;
 "Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck
 And peered through darkness. Ah! that night
 Of all dark nights! And then a speck --
 A light! A light! A light! A light!
 It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
 It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
 He gained a world; he gave that world
 Its greatest lesson: "On! sail on!"