

Parables of Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (Matt. 13:44-46)

A Small Group Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did you share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Christ's Object Lessons (COL)*, pp. 103-121
- "In **ancient times it was customary for men to hide their treasures in the earth**. Thefts and robberies were frequent. And whenever there was a change in the ruling power, those who had large possessions were liable to be put under heavy tribute. Moreover the country was in constant danger of invasion by marauding armies. As a consequence, the rich endeavored to preserve their wealth by concealing it, and the earth was looked upon as a safe hiding place. But often the place of concealment was forgotten; death might claim the owner, imprisonment or exile might separate him from his treasure, and the wealth he had taken such pains to preserve was left for the fortunate finder. In Christ's day it was not uncommon to discover in neglected land old coins and ornaments of gold and silver" (COL 103).
- "**This parable illustrates the value of the heavenly treasure**, and the effort that should be made to secure it. The finder of the treasure in the field was ready to part with all that he had, ready to put forth untiring labor, in order to secure the hidden riches. So the finder of heavenly treasure will count no labor too great and no sacrifice too dear, in order to gain the treasures of truth" (COL 104)
- "According to Mosaic law, he who found what another had lost was to restore it (see on Lev. 6:3, 4). But in this instance, apparently, the original owner was long since dead, and the treasure could not be restored to him. Thus the finder had as much right to it as anyone, and title to the treasure legally went along with title to the land" (*SDA Bible Commentary*).
- "**In the parable the field containing the treasure represents the Holy Scriptures. And the gospel is the treasure**" (COL 104).

- Some ways to make Scripture primary in one's life
 - Set daily, uninterrupted, unrushed time to spend in God's Word
 - Ask God to guide you as you read, and apply Scripture to your individual experience
 - Make a covenant with a friend to call you each day to find out if you've spent time in God's Word
 - Invest in resources to study the Bible – commentaries, a concordance, cross reference, Bible dictionary, etc. There are a number of online resources as well.
 - Journal your thoughts after Bible study
 - Pray through Bible passages
 - Obey what you've read (cf. Eza 7:10)
 - Memorise Scripture
 - Share your devotional insights with others
- **"God does not conceal His truth from men. By their own course of action they make it obscure to themselves.** Christ gave the Jewish people abundant evidence that He was the Messiah; but His teaching called for a decided change in their lives. They saw that if they received Christ, they must give up their cherished maxims and traditions, their selfish, ungodly practices. It required a sacrifice to receive changeless, eternal truth. Therefore they would not admit the most conclusive evidence that God could give to establish faith in Christ" (COL 105).
- Here are some things that 'hide' the gospel treasures from our sight:
 - Selfishness, pride and arrogance
 - When human tradition, speculations and philosophies are placed above Scripture
 - A desire for worldly wealth, honour and power
 - A carnal, unspiritual nature (see 1 Cor. 2:14)
- **"Those who desire to find the treasures of truth must dig for them as the miner digs for the treasure hidden in the earth. No halfhearted, indifferent work will avail.** It is essential for old and young, not only to read God's word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding" (COL 111).
- **Don't search Scripture to support your cherished opinions,** but study it to accept **and obey** the light given. (cf. COL 112)
- "By [the Holy Spirit's] power the vital truths upon which the salvation of the soul depends are impressed upon the mind, and the way of life is made so plain that none need err therein. **As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures"** (COL 113)
- "The **experimental knowledge of God**... transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and **opens to him the rich treasures of the universe"** (COL 114).

The Pearl of Great Price

- **"Christ Himself is the pearl of great price....**The glory of the attributes of God is expressed in His character. Every page of the Holy Scriptures shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without a flaw.... **All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul, for this world and for the world to come, is**

found in Christ. Our Redeemer is the pearl so precious that in comparison all things else may be accounted loss” (COL 115)

- **“The merchantman in the parable represents a class who were sincerely desiring truth”** (COL 116).
- In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. People have often wondered how Christ can be ‘purchased’. **Even though He comes as a gift, we only obtain this Pearl only through complete surrender to Him** (cf. COL 116)
- “We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it” (COL 117)
- **“The parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls has a double significance: it applies not only to men as seeking the kingdom of heaven, but to Christ as seeking His lost inheritance.** Christ, the heavenly merchantman seeking goodly pearls, saw in lost humanity the pearl of price. In man, defiled and ruined by sin, He saw the possibilities of redemption.... God looked upon humanity, not as vile and worthless; He looked upon it in Christ, saw it as it might become through redeeming love” (COL 118).
- *Read Matt. 13:44-46. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*).
 - What do think the ‘field’ and the ‘hidden treasure’ in the parable refer to?
 - Why is it so important to be diligent students of Scripture (or to plough the field deeply)?
 - What are practical ways that Christians can ensure Bible study remains primary amidst the busyness of modern life?
 - Why are people generally unwilling to ‘sell ALL they have’ in order to ‘purchase’ the hidden treasure?
 - What will you say to a person who says you can still be a good Christian without completely ‘selling all’ to follow Christ?
 - What treasures come with following Christ?
 - What are some things that can hide the gospel treasures from our sight?
 - Why do you think Christ is compared to a Pearl?
 - Who do you think the merchant represents?
 - The pearl in the parable had to be bought? How is it possible to ‘purchase’ Christ?
 - What do these 2 parables have in common?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - Share an experience when your faith cost you something?
 - Elaborate on your Bible study habits?
 - With whom would you like to share the wealth you have in Christ this week?
 - Share what happened with you discovered the Pearl of Great Price?
 - What sacrifices is God calling you to make, in order to deepen your walk with Him?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I will share with 2 people this week, about the valuable Pearl I have found in Christ.”

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer