

God's Field of Dreams - Matthew 13:44-46

Introduction: In the movie *"Field of Dreams,"* Ray Kinsella is the owner of a farm in Iowa. In his field is corn which he has planted to make a living for his wife and young daughter. But mysteriously, Ray plows under acres and acres of his corn crop in order to build a baseball field. Why? Because he heard a voice say to him, *"If you build it they will come."* The field plays host to legendary ghosts of past great ballplayers such as *"Shoeless Joe Jackson"* and others. Ray is faced with the dilemma of either holding onto his field of dreams or selling the farm to save the life he knows. His brother-in-law counsels him with these words, *"You're going to lose your farm pal!...You're going bankrupt and you will default your loan...Sell now or you'll lose everything!...How could you plow under your crop?...You will lose everything!"* As the story goes Ray holds onto his field of dreams at the high cost of possibly losing all this world has to offer. This field meant everything to Ray and because of that he was willing to sacrifice everything for it.

Ray's story is similar to Jesus' parables we'll read about today – The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. In both these parables Jesus shares two ideas about the kingdom of God. READ Matthew 13:44-46.

Let me try to clear up a misconception. In telling these two parables about the Kingdom of God Jesus is relating how God works to establish His purposes in the world.

The traditional way these parables have been interpreted says that we are like the man who found the treasure or the pearl and that the treasure is salvation or eternal life. It says that we should be willing to pay any price to obtain it because our relationship with God is that valuable. In other words, our salvation is worth everything we have.

That's one interpretation, and I have used it before. As my preacher buddies would say, *"That'll preach!"* But as I studied these parables in light of God working to establish His purposes in the world I discovered something. Every one of these parables - the Parable of the Sower; the Parable of the Weeds and the Wheat; the Parable of the Mustard Seed; and the Parable of Net refers to the field or the sea as the world and the man doing the things spoken of is always God - not us.

That is when I began to look at them from a different perspective. And when I did, I saw something wonderful and meaningful about the character of God. I saw a glimpse of just how great His love for us is and how valuable we are to Him.

In these two parables, the man in the field and the merchant are both one and the same but they don't represent us. Rather they reveal to us our heavenly Father. We are the treasure He's found in the field. We are the pearl of great price. And God, our heavenly Father sold all He had so that He might buy us. He gave His own son to redeem us. This isn't referring to "*us*" selling all that we have. What did we have? All we have in the past is a life full of sin. All we have in the present is guilt. All we face in the future is death. We have nothing to "*sell*." Our righteousness is like filthy rags in His sight.

If these parables teach us anything, they remind us that we're worth something to God. We're worth so much that He really loves us and wants to hang out with us. Do you remember when you were single and someone told you that someone was interested in you. What did you do? Did you say, "*Oh great now I have to go find out about this person. What a bummer!*" No, you wanted to find out more about them. That's the way it is with God. He is real interested in you. He values you. When you finally realize that the God of the universe is really interested in you and wants to get to know you, that should arouse your curiosity enough to want to find out more about Him. Who is this God who thinks I am so valuable? These two parables are telling us just how much we are worth to God. He's found us in His Field of Dreams. The first point I want to make deals with:

1. Our Worth to God

Have you ever gone for a loan and had the loan officer ask you how much you're worth? Whenever I hear that, it makes me feel a little insecure, because when I add it all up, I'm not worth a whole lot. According to my insurance policy, it looks as though I'm worth more dead than I am alive!

I heard or read somewhere a few years ago that the materials of your body are worth only 98 cents. But that always seemed a little unreasonable to me. I mean, doesn't the Bible say that "*God created man in His own image?*" (Gen 1:27). Didn't David praise God for being "*fearfully and wonderfully made?*" (Ps. 139:14) And didn't he pray for God to keep him as "*the apple of (His) eye?*" (Ps. 17:8). If God thinks so highly of us, why would He make us out of cheap materials? It didn't make sense.

Then I read where a chemist named Harold, J. Morowitz took out his chemical supply catalog and began looking up the prices of all the chemicals that composed the human body. Well, he found that some of the chemicals in our bodies would sell for prices such as \$8,860 a gram. Other chemicals cost varying prices such as \$285 a gram; \$225 a gram; \$47.50 a gram; and \$36 and down. Human DNA would sell for \$76 a gram, but the real shocker was \$8 million a gram for a certain follicle-stimulating chemical, and Prolactin, the hormone that stimulates milk production for mothers, costs \$17.5 million a gram.

When Morowitz calculated the percentages of each chemical in the composition of the human body, he calculated the average value, per gram of any human being was \$245.54. Then he took his own weight of 168 pounds which is 79,364 grams, subtracted 68% of that because the average man's body is 68% water, and multiplied the difference by \$254.54, and discovered that his body alone was worth \$6,000,015.44!

I guess they were right a few years ago when they named that show the Six Million Dollar Man! So, guys, next time your wife tells you that you're worthless, just find a way to extract all those chemicals out of your body and show her!

But really, all we have is just the chemicals. Think what it would cost to manufacture those chemicals as they exist in the human body. What would it cost to assemble them into living cells and then into tissue and organs and finally into a living and breathing human being? How much would all that cost? Add all that up and then you'd have a more accurate picture of how much is man worth. But Dr. Morowitz said, at this point, that in dollars and cents said, "*Our ability to calculate this now disappears!*" The truth is that we're all worth more than we realize. It is important to understand your personal worth. It will affect how you live your everyday lives. The second point has to do with:

2. The Work of Jesus

Since we are so valuable to God, what did Jesus actually do to purchase us? We are told in **Philippians 2:5-7 (NIV)** that "...*Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*" Jesus laid aside His God stuff and became a man. He emptied Himself, and went to the cross as Heb. 12:2 says, "*for the joy set before Him.*" That means He gladly set aside His throne to purchase us. It wasn't easy but He

did it willingly. We are told that Jesus found joy in the fact that He must give up His throne in heaven and come to live with men. **2 Cor. 8:9 (NIV)** says, *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”*

The Bible says that God is constantly looking across the face of the earth for people who He can be strong for. And as the merchant looking for fine pearls, when Jesus came to this earth, He was seeking for people to be saved. It’s not that we’re looking for Him – for the most part we’re not, but He is constantly looking for us. This is the glorious work of the Gospel. God seeking to bring us to Himself. The last point I want to make is:

3. The Wonder of Worth

This pearl merchant was a connoisseur of pearls. It was what he did for a living. He was an expert in his field. And when he found this one pearl, he knew it was the real thing.

Why are we so valuable to God? Well, He is a connoisseur of jewels. He recognizes a precious jewel when He sees one. And when he found you, He found a pearl of great price.

Now what is the real value of a pearl? If you’re hungry, will it fill you up if you eat it? If you’re thirsty, will it quench your thirst? Will it protect you from the elements? Can it keep you warm if you are freezing? No, then what good is it?

The real value of the pearl is in its beauty. It has inherent value. It is not really good for anything really useful, but it is still a most precious possession to the owner. He likes to behold it.

Well, that is the way we are to God. In His eyes, we are treasures not because of what we can do for Him, but because we have inherent value. He just loves to behold us for our beauty!

In **Malachi 3:17 (NIV)** God says of us, *“They will be mine... in the day when I make up my treasured possession.”* In **Exodus 19:5 (NIV)** God says, *“...out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,”* God calls us His treasures because that’s the way God thinks of us – as His treasured possession. And we please Him because of who we are, not because of what we do.

Some would look at the men in these parables and say they speak of taking foolish risks. They would say *“What a risk they took is selling everything they had to buy that field or buy that one pearl! That’s foolish!”*

They'd surely have to sell their possessions at a loss in order to scrape up enough to buy the field or the pearl.

And what if the pearl turns out to be worthless? He's sold everything just to buy this one pearl?"

Well, was Jesus taking a foolish risk in seeking us? Would He have done it if you were the only person on this earth? Yes He would. You are so very valuable to Him. He knows what He has with you. He doesn't need to be like us.

In my retirement account, my advisor told me to diversify. I've got some stock investments, some mutual funds, some fixed funds, some international funds – just to keep from “*putting all my eggs in one basket*” so to speak. But not so with this merchant. This man put all his life earnings, everything he had into this one pearl. Some would say it was risky, but not for him. He knew what he was doing. He knew he wouldn't lose out. So it is with God, He put it all on the line in the plan of salvation. He did it because He knew He would not lose out. We are well worth it.

You know, the more valuable something is, the more we care for it. If you've got an old clunker of a car that needs lots of work, you'll more than likely try to sell it. But if you've got an old classic car, even though it may need a lot of work, you're more likely to keep it and fix it up. You're not about to lose your valuable possessions. So it is with God. He is not about to lose us, not after He spent so much for us. That is why Paul said in **2 Timothy 1:12 (NIV)** “*...I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*” How true, God will care for us even if we have any breakdowns, He will restore us.

Now put yourself in this merchant's shoes. He goes into the store and lays on the counter his entire life's savings. The sales clerk hands over the beautiful pearl. The merchant holds it with two hands as he walks out the door. Just as he gets out the door the pearl falls out of his hand and rolls into the gutter and drops into the sewer! What would he do? Stand there for a minute and then say, “*Oh well,*” and walk off.

What if you worked all week and then on Friday you finally got your paycheck. You go to the bank and cash your check and as you walk out and the wind blows the money right out of your hands. What would you do? “*Oh well, there it goes!*”

I don't think so. You would chase that money. You'd do everything in your power to get it back. That is how your Heavenly Father looks at you. He paid the ultimate price for you. He is not going to let you go if you happen to get tossed about by the wind. He'd climb down into that sewer and retrieve that pearl. He'll never give up on you, no matter what happens. He will stand by you. To Him, you are the most valuable thing in creation.

Conclusion: You may be here this morning and in your state of mind, you've convinced yourself that you're a nobody. You may think your life has amounted to one failure after another. The world may be telling you, "*You might as well give up because you're a loser pal!...You're bankrupt and you're defaulting on life...Why don't you sell out to the world because nobody loves you?*" But before you do, please listen to the message of these parables. If they tell you anything, please hear Lord saying that YOU are a treasure that is hidden in the field of the world. Please hear God saying that YOU are the pearl of great price that Jesus has been searching for. You are a treasure that He paid for with His life. He gave everything He had in order to buy YOU out of the slave market of sin – That's why you're worthy!