**THE VALUE OF THE GIFT**

***Matthew 13:44-53***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 10 – 12/24/2017

**Introduction:** In this lesson, we are going to look at multiple parables found in Matthew 13. These parables include the Hidden Treasure, the Great Pearl, the Full Net, and the Householder. These parables all share a common theme in that their purpose is to show the value of the gift of Heaven. Too often, we do not take the time to ponder the full significance of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus gave these parables specifically to His disciples (vs. 36), which shows us that these were meant to serve as a reminder to those who had already put their faith in Him. Let us look at these parables and be reminded of the greatness of the gift as well.

1. WE MUST REALIZE THAT IT IS A GIFT WORTH SEARCHING FOR. (44-46)
2. **Notice that the treasure was hidden in a field.** In verse 44, we see that the treasure was initially hidden in a field. This man that found the treasure did not find it by accident. He went into the field with hopes of finding something on that field valuable enough to cause him to purchase it. The item that he found was so valuable that he hid the treasure again just to make sure nobody would see it before he was able to purchase the field for himself. He probably raced home as quick as he could to procure the necessary funds to make the purchase. He may not have even taken the time or run the risk of telling those close to him until he was certain that he had purchased it!
3. **Notice that the man was seeking after pearls.** In verses 45-46, Jesus chose to use a pearl as an example of the kingdom of Heaven. If you stop to think about a pearl, you realize that this is not something that is easily found. To find a pearl, one must search at the bottom of a body of water and on the inside of an oyster, clam, or mussel. Even if you find a pearl, it’s even less likely that you will find a good pearl. This man was willing to search to find some good pearls, but he never imagined that he would find that perfect pearly. It was definitely worth the trip. Those that came in search of Jesus, as He was born in a manger in Bethlehem, certainly were totally convinced as well that they had found the One that they had been searching for.
4. WE MUST REALIZE THAT IT IS A GIFT WORTH SELLING EVERYTHING FOR. (44-46)
5. **Notice that the man was joyful to sell what he had in exchange for the treasure.** In verse 44, we see that the man went and sold all that he had for the joy of buying the field. He never stopped to consider whether the value was worth selling all of his possessions. He was glad at the opportunity to buy the field. When we received salvation, we did not have to weigh out whether it was a good gift for us or not. However, after we receive salvation, many of us spend too much time contemplating whether giving up of our possessions is worth it to follow Christ. We should be able to give abundantly and do it with a joyful spirit.
6. **Notice that the merchant was willing to trade all for one.** In verses 45-46, we see that a merchant was searching for goodly pearls. Notice that he was searching for more than one initially. However, when he found this one pearl, it was great enough to trade all that he had for just that one. Keep in mind that a merchant made a living off of finding and trading things. At any one time, he needed multiple items available in his inventory to trade for others. By selling everything to buy that one item, he was clearly stating that he had no further intention of looking or trading for anything else. This was that one item that he had been trading for his entire life.
7. WE MUST REALIZE THAT IT IS A GIFT WORTH SURRENDERING FOR. (47-50)
8. **Notice that everyone will ultimately have to surrender.** In this next parable, we see that the kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a net that is cast into the sea. The net gathers fish of every kind. There is no escaping that net. It is simply a matter of whether you will be a good fish or a bad fish. The good fish get kept in a vessel (mansion), but the bad fish get cast away. Humanity has no escape from death. Sadly, it is impending upon all of us. The gift of Heaven is certainly worth surrendering for when we consider the alternative of not surrendering here on earth.
9. **Notice that our nature is to fight against giving ourselves to this gift.** When you think about fish being caught in a net, you do not typically think about fish giving themselves up easily to the net. If you have ever tried to catch fish with a net before, you realize that it is not an easy task. This is because the fish are quick and try to escape the net at every opportunity. This is amazing to think that the gift of God is powerful enough to cause us as fish to willfully give ourselves up to the net of the Gospel. Mankind has sought to rebel against God at every turn since the creation of the world.
10. WE MUST REALIZE THAT IT IS A GIFT WORTH STUDYING AND SPEAKING FOR. (51-52)
11. **Notice that a scribe is one who writes and studies the Word of God.** In verse 51, Jesus asks His disciples if they understood the parables that He had spoken. After confirming that they did, Jesus then refers to them as scribes who had been instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, they had been trusted with studying and reiterating the gift that they had received. The scribes took their jobs very seriously. They were meticulous in protecting the Old Testament because they realized that It was of immense value. Jesus expects for us to handle the Good News of the gift of Salvation the same way. We ought to desire to reflect upon our salvation and study the significance of it in the Scriptures.
12. **Notice that they brought out that which was both old and new.** The point here is that they shared it with others. Every time they went back to it, they were able to bring out of it things that were both old and new. That’s the magnificence of the Bible! No matter how many times we go back to It, we are able to be newly refreshed while pondering the old truths of It. We ought to spend so much time in It that we are able to bring the information to others that we interact with in life. It is a treasure that has unlimited resources. We can never give out too much from It.

**CONCLUSION**: As we celebrate this Christmas season, we ought to remember the value of the gift of salvation. To think that God Himself took on the form of a baby just to save us from eternal damnation ought to compel us to rejoice and praise Him every day. As you gather around with your family to open gifts and fellowship with one another, you should first remember the greatest gift of all that has been given to you. After finishing these parables, Jesus returns to His country with the hopes of sharing the gift with them. Unfortunately, those that should have been the most receptive to this gift were the one’s that valued it the least. Let us not be guilty of undervaluing that which Jesus has done for us!