

The Pearl of Great Price

by Jack Hyles

The sermon emphasizes the importance of setting a clear and lofty goal in life and working towards it with determination and perseverance.

Duration: 32:19

Scripture: Matthew 13:45

Topics: "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a goal in life. He shares a story about a young lady named Levan who was crippled but had a strong faith in God. The preacher challenges young people, members of the church, college students, and children to set high goals and work towards them, not letting anything hinder their progress. He encourages them to find the perfect will of God for their lives and compares it to the 'pearl of great price' mentioned in the Bible. The preacher also emphasizes the need for diligence and perseverance in pursuing one's goals, using examples of a man seeking pearls and a girl named Geraldine who found salvation in a difficult situation.

Transcript

The merchant man, so says the scripture, was seeking goodly pearls. The word seeking there is in the linear in the Greek. He sought and sought and sought and sought.

It was his life to seek great pearls. That's all that he had in life. That's the big consuming thing he did, to seek great pearls.

And suddenly one day the Bible says, when he had found one pearl of great price, notice, didn't say he was looking for one pearl, he was looking for pearls. But one day he found wrapped up in one pearl all he had ever sought in other pearls. And he said, that's what I want.

He took the pearls that he'd found in this store and sold them. He took the pearls he'd bought from this merchant man and sold them. He took the pearls he'd gathered from this place and sold them.

And he bought the one pearl of great price. Now I want to call your attention to four things in this story. In the first place, this merchant man had only one goal in life.

That's all. I ask him this morning, Sir, what are you seeking? His answer is, pearls. I ask you this morning, Sir, what is your goal in life? He says, my goal is to seek pearls.

I ask you, Sir, what other great things do you have in your life? I have no other great things in my life. My life is built around seeking pearls. I speak this especially to our young people, but directly to every person in this room.

I believe, as I've said hundreds of times from this desk, I believe that God has a will for every life. And I believe that God has a purpose for every one of us being on this earth. There's some reason why you're here.

Now the purpose of life is to find why I'm here and have that one goal in my life. I am here for a reason. I've been here forty-six years.

I hope to be here for a few more years. But my passing through this world is for a purpose. There is a reason why I'm here.

I must seek and find that reason. This fellow said, my job is seeking pearls. My one aim in life is to gather pearls.

My reason for being here is to gather pearls. I can recall when I was just a kid, God called me to preach. I was the least likely fellow to be a preacher.

Nobody ever suspected that I'd ever be a preacher. But I knew that God had called me to be a preacher. And so I yielded myself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I had a picture. I had a picture. I had this picture this morning, right here.

I had a picture in my mind of a great crowd of people before me and me behind the pulpit. I can recall one time, young people, I can recall one time when I had a dream. And I dreamed of a great crowd of people sitting before me.

And I was preaching to that great crowd of people. That was my dream. That was my dream.

Everything I did pointed to that one thing. Someday I was going to preach to a great crowd of people. Everything I did, all of my training, all of my planning, all of my work in life was pointed toward that one goal.

I'm going to be behind the pulpit. I'm going to preach. I'm going to stand before a crowd and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, what is your dream? Young people, let me say this. You will not live a successful nor happy nor fruitful life till you find out what you're supposed to do. You say, I'm going to graduate from high school.

I say, what are you going to do? I don't know. Get a job, I guess. I don't know.

I'll find a job somewhere. That's not enough. Find what God wants you to do.

Find what God wants you to be. Find where God wants you to go. Have a goal in life.

And this young man said, my goal is seeking pearls. But the second thing I want you to notice about this is his goal was lofty. His goal was lofty.

He did not say my goal is seeking bricks, or my goal is seeking stones, or my goal is seeking timber, or my goal is seeking common sea pearls. The next fellow was seeking goodly pearls. Not just pearls, goodly pearls.

He had a lofty goal. Now, not only should a person say, this is my goal in life. Men, young men, I believe that you ought to say, if God wants you to be an attorney, I think you ought to have a door in front of your mind all the time.

I think you ought to see on the outside of that door your name, John Doe, attorney at law. Or you ought to see yourself setting a desk with a little plaque in front of you, or nameplate in front of you, John Doe, attorney at law. And you ought to say, everything I do is going to point toward one thing, to sit me behind that desk and to put that shingle on my door.

We have too many folks in life just as the old fellow down south used to say, I don't know, I don't care, all I want is my rocking chair. That doesn't quite satisfy me. That doesn't quite do.

I want to have a goal. Young people, set up straight. Get up behind that curtain, fellow.

Get up behind that curtain. You listen to me. We ought to have a goal in our lives.

Every life ought to have a goal. I'm going that direction, and everything I do points toward that one particular goal in my life. I can recall years ago, a number of years ago, a young lady in our church came to my study.

Everybody here just about, most of you know, you home folks know, LaVonne Canavan. LaVonne happened to be one of the best friends of Becky. LaVonne has spent many nights in our house.

She was one of Becky's attendants when Becky was married. LaVonne, all of us know LaVonne, was crippled. It looked like for a while she would never walk again.

It came time for LaVonne to come to my office, as all of our young people come when they are seniors for her senior appointment. We discuss the future of our seniors. LaVonne came to my office, and I said, LaVonne, what do you plan to do? She said, I plan to go to college for a year.

I said, what do you plan to be? She said, well, I'm not sure. I said, LaVonne, you ought to decide now what you're going to be, what you're going to do. And LaVonne said, I just don't want to stay in college more than a year.

I said, it doesn't matter what you want to do. The goal, what is your goal? And LaVonne said, I don't know what my goal is. And I said, set it.

And she said, well, Brother Howells, help me. And I said, LaVonne, a cripple, and you know this is true, a cripple will have to have a profession that wants them, a profession that gives them stature. Or a cripple will be at the mercy of the government and welfare.

And I said, you'll either be somebody, or as a cripple, you'll be nobody. And LaVonne said, Brother Howells, what does that mean? I said, if I were you, I'd become a schoolteacher. I'd teach school.

She said, Brother Howells, I'm not that good a student. I said, then become that good a student. But she said, I don't want to stay in school that long.

I said, whether you want to or not, do it. I said, one of these days, you'll be the object of Thanksgiving baskets, and you'll be the object of welfare, and you won't even be able to transport your own body, maybe. And I said, set you a goal.

And set a lofty goal. Become somebody. LaVonne said, Brother Howells, I said, do it.

LaVonne went off to Bob Jones University. She came back, and she said she decided she wasn't going to go the next year. And I said, yes, you are.

You're going to go the next year. And she said, why? I said, because I'm not going to. I got a little healthy at her to try to straighten her up.

I said, because I don't want to have to buy your food. Boys, be quiet on the front. Hey, I don't want to have to buy your food when you grow up.

I don't want to have to buy. I've got enough young'uns to feed without having to feed you. I said, go back to school.

Have a lofty goal. Set your goal high. Work toward that goal.

Let nothing keep you from reaching it. She went back to school. She graduated.

She's now a teacher of a school in Pensacola, Florida. I got the sweetest letter the other day. Dear Brother Howells, I appreciate you more than you'll ever know.

You made me keep on. You made me set a goal. You made me work toward that goal.

You told me not to quit. I can recall when I was in college, we had a fella on the campus. I won't tell you his name because you might know him.

He was tongue-tied. He don't like men. He was, maybe he was hair-lipped.

I'm not sure. I'm not trying to mock anybody. I'm just telling you how I think that he thought.

He don't like men. And I said, what are you going to be? I called his name. He said, I'm going to be a preacher.

That one I'm going to be a preacher. I thought maybe he'd be a better plumber or a carpenter. You know, where you use your hands instead of your tongue.

I said, you sure? God's called you a preacher. That one I'm going to be a preacher. And boy, he saw a girl on campus.

She was one of the prettiest girls, if not the prettiest girl on campus. And he came to me one day and he said, see that girl over there? And I said, yeah. He said, I'm going to marry her.

I laughed. I said, yeah, sure, I'm Napoleon. I said, just cross Waterloo, you know.

And I said, no, I mean it. I'm going to marry her. He walked over to her and he said, would you like to have a name with me? And he said, no, I wouldn't.

And he came back to me. I said, do you have any luck? He said, no, I don't have any luck, but I'm going to marry that girl. I said, you can't even get a date? He said, I didn't have one good date.

I said, don't marry her. And so I laughed. And I recall with my best buddy, I said, hey, guess what? Guess who he's going to marry? Oh, so-and-so, prettiest girl on the campus.

And we laughed and everybody made fun. But you know what he did? He went down and rented him a suit. He, not like you rented, he had enough sense not to rent, go to a lingerie shop to do it.

But he, he, he went down and got him a suit, rented him a suit. Boy, he got, he was a Lorchester field. I want you to know, he got all decked up.

He learned how to bow. He learned how to open the door. He learned how to take care.

And do you know what? He was a gentleman of all gentlemen. And he began to practice how to talk and he could say a few words plainly. And one line he learned was, would you go out with me? He started on, would you go out with me? And he practiced, would you go out with me? And he learned to say that one sentence, would you go out with me? And he went up to that girl and he said, called her by name, he said, would you go out with me? She said, what did you say? He said, would you go out with me? She said, you can talk plainly.

He said, just that one sentence is all I can And she said, what did you say? Would you go out with me? Well, can you say anything else? No, I mean, now, but I can say, would you go out with me? And do you know what? Do you know she looked at him and she said, if it means that much to you, I'll go out with you. And then he started practicing on, wouldn't you marry me? Wouldn't you marry me? Wouldn't you marry me? Did you know what? Did you know she turned down the football stars, the basketball stars, and all the rest of us handsome guys, you know, she turned down all the fellas. And do you know that she's married to that fella to this day? You know why? He had a goal.

He said, I'm going to marry that girl, I'm going to marry that girl. And do you know what? That young man took speech, he took public speaking, he learned to speak. He's now a pastor, a successful pastor, and an honorable man.

Why? He had a goal. He said, I'll not be thwarted. I'll not be turned aside.

I'm going to be a preacher. I'm going to marry that girl. And he did.

And he's made it. Why? He had a goal. I know a lot of you talented people, they're swathful, no diligence, no character.

You won't stick with it. You turn back. You turn aside.

You turn away. You don't stand beside. You don't stick with it.

You don't amount to much. You know why? Because you did not set yourself a goal. This man said, I've got, I've got a goal in life.

I'm going to be a pearl collector. But more than that, I'm going to seek goodly pearls. We had a girl down in Garland, Texas.

Her name was Geraldine. I recall going out visiting one day over on Mayfield Drive, North Garland. Knocked on the door.

I've never seen a filthier house. I've never seen. I mean, it would make the ghetto look like Fifth Avenue in New York City.

It was terrible. Filth, dirt, bunch of kids running around. Some of them half naked and the others all naked just about.

Tragic situation. Geraldine and her family got saved. We had to feed them to keep them out of the poor house.

They got saved. One day Geraldine came to my office and she said, I'm going to be a schoolteacher. And I said, Geraldine, I'm for you.

Personally, I didn't believe it. How can you go to school? I don't know, but I'm going to be a schoolteacher. Did you know, young people, a person that won't be whipped can't be whipped? Did you know the person that says, that's my goal, I'm fasting my eyes, fasting my eyes on a star, that's my goal, that's my dream, that's my hope, that's what I'm going to do, that's what I'm going to be, nothing will stop me.

This man said, I'm going to have a lofty goal, but something else. Everything he did was seeking for the goal. Now bear in mind this.

He didn't dream about it. He sought it. It says he sought goodly pearls.

He didn't buy them at a store, set up a sign and say, pearls bought here. He went looking for pearls. He set out to get pearls.

He went house to house, do you have any pearls? I'd like to buy some goodly pearls. He went to a shop and asked, do you have any pearls? I'd like to buy some goodly pearls. He went to his neighbors and said, do you have any pearls? I'd like to buy some goodly pearls.

He went to a jeweler and said, do you have any good pearls? I want to buy some goodly pearls. He sought the pearls. Listen, he said, I just don't have enough money to go to school.

Well, get it! Well, he said, I just don't have enough, I'm not as smart enough to pass in college. Then get smart enough. You don't fail because you don't have it.

You fail because you don't make yourself do it. This man didn't say, nobody's knocked on my door. Boy, I'm going to send you out in a minute.

This fellow didn't say, nobody's knocked on my door and offered me any pearls today. He knocked on other folks' doors. You know the difference in First Baptist Church of Hammond and most other churches in this area? We've got more than a welcome sign out in front.

We've got a welcome sign on the front door of all the people. We go where they are. We don't say, put an ad in the paper and say, come to church and that's it.

Put a sign out in front and say, welcome and that's it. We knock on their doors. One of the fellows said the other night to me, I made a call and the fellow looked at me and he said, Reverend, I'll tell you what, your church is ruining my life.

He said, you know, when you came to this town, every Thursday night, somebody from your church came by to see me. Now he said, it's every night. He said, used to.

I could at least watch television one night a week. He said, now, your church is driving me nuts. People say, well, boy, that kind of program, folks don't get to that at you, you'll die.

Yeah, we're having trouble dying, yeah, we really are. I'm simply saying, you know why this church has great crowds? We go get them, that's why. Hey, listen, that goal you set for your life, that thing you want to be, that thing you want to do, that dream you have, get it, go get it.

Good night, go get it. Don't let hell or high water stop you. Go get it.

Go get it. He set out to get pearls, house to house and shop to shop, no wasted time, no wasted life. Others played while he worked.

Others played while he looked for pearls. Others loafed while he looked for pearls. Others enjoyed leisure while he looked for pearls.

Others took time off while he looked for pearls. Others said, I haven't had a pearl leader come to me lately while he sought pearls. Others wasted hours while he sought pearls.

Oh, the wasted hours of our lives. Oh, the time spent languishing in leisure. Somebody said to me the other day, he said, you know, I said, our college students are going to wear out if they don't slow down.

I don't believe it for a minute. I don't believe it for a minute. Good old fashioned day and night hard work never hurt anybody.

I want us to have the kind of preachers going out from our college that'll work day and night. They know no 40 hour week. They know no time of loafing.

They keep on going. They keep on working. They don't loaf while others work.

They work. And they work day and at balls that I kept back nothing from you, but taught you publicly in house to house, night and day with tears. Listen, the world's going to hell.

A country is perishing. A world is about to plunge into eternity. Souls are lost in darkness, headed for hell.

Our country is about to be destroyed. Somebody's got to say, I'll work till Jesus comes. Nothing stopped this fella.

Pearls I need and pearls I want and pearls I'll get. Others will play, but I'll seek pearls. Others will loaf, but I'll seek pearls.

Others will lounge, but I'll seek pearls. Everything he did was to seek the reaching of the goal. You know why Jim Vineyard's the best bus man in America? You're not supposed to do this, but I'll do it right this time.

A very nice lady came to me the other day. She said, do you know what you did in church? She said, you took your coattail and wiped your glasses. And I said, I knew it.

You know why Jim Vineyard's the best bus man in America? Jim Vineyard's got a dream he's working towards. He sat in my office yesterday morning and astounded me when he told me what he had for his dreams. I'm not sure I can finance all of his dreams.

But he goes after it. He knows no hours. He doesn't say, I'm going to work late tonight, so I'll come in two hours late this morning.

He doesn't say that. He says, my goal, my dream, my hope is to do this for God. You know why C.W. Fisk is one of the great soul winners in America? He just keeps at it.

This is it. Stuart Epperson, a very successful businessman, one of my personal friends. I baptized him in the Jordan River years ago.

Came up to a convention in Chicago and he wanted to come out and see Baptist City and talk to me and he wanted to go soul winning with Brother Fisk. Brother Fisk took him out soul winning. He came back and I said, well, Stuart, what do you think? He said, man, that fellow won't quit.

He said, we went to a house and the mother said, I don't think you ought to talk to my daughter. But he said, Brother Fisk just stayed around because he's going to talk to that 19-year-old daughter. And the grandmother said, she'll come Sunday.

Don't bother her now. But old Fisk just stayed there. He didn't leave.

He knew that the mother and grandmother were going to leave after a while. So he just out-of-stayed them. And he said, man, that would have gone a long time before he went.

He said, you know, I would have said, okay, she's going to come Sunday, that's wonderful. But he said, Fisk could treat a coon. Fisk could, you know what treat a coon means, that you ignorant, heathen, city slickers.

He pointed a bird, that beagle we got at our house. He only points hot dogs. He points the kitchen table.

And he said, he said, Fisk just, he just, he said, he's like a dog. Got a whole receipt of fetish bitches and wouldn't let go. That's why, he's not a great soul winner because he's good looking.

You look at him, you'll find out better than that. He's a great soul winner because the consuming passion of his life is to be a great soul winner. Robert Billings is not the greatest Christian educator in the world today because he is handsome or because he has good kisses.

Not an excitement to pick him up, I tried. But he has to go, day and night. Before you get up, he's at work.

And after you've gone to bed, he's at work. All he does is build around. He has some pearls he's trying to seek.

The poor thing is this, and I think this is one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen in the Bible. Here's a fellow that said, I want some pretty pearls. One day he came to a pearl, he looked at it.

He said, that's the prettiest pearl I've ever seen. Oh, and suddenly he forgot every pearl he'd ever owned or every pearl he'd ever seen. And he said, that's the one I want.

He found in that one beautiful pearl, everything he had been looking for in the seeking of many pearls. The Bible said he sold everything. He went back to this leader and he said, say, fellow, I bought some pearls for you a while ago.

Would you buy them back for me? I'll even give them to you a little discount. And hey, I got some pearls from you. Would you, would you have them, buy them back? I got, I found a, something I want to buy.

Hey, could I have my money back? I want to, I'll give these pearls back. And he sold every pearl he had. Why? I'll tell you why.

Because he found one pearl that had wrapped up in it every hue and every glow and every piece of beauty that all the pearls he'd ever seen put together had. And that's what I found. Have you sought for contentment? That's a good pearl to seek.

Have you sought for joy? That's a good pearl to seek. Have you sought for peace? That's a good pearl to seek. Have you sought for satisfaction? That's a good pearl to seek.

Have you sought for fulfillment? That's a good pearl to seek. So in my life I sought for satisfaction, tried to find it in some little pearl, and I thought I'd found it. I sought for peace and a pearl of peace, and I sought the pearl of joy, and I sought the pearl of happiness.

And one day, young friends, I found the perfect will of God for my life. And I found in serving God with this perfect will, everything I've sought in multitudes of pearls, I found in this one pearl of great price. For 27 years I've been the perfect will of God for my life.

You say, Preacher, what is that pearl? It's giving everything to God. This fellow sold all he had. Sold it all.

Why? He didn't need any more pearls. People, the deacon said to me last night, you ought to have a raise. They said to me last Thursday night, the last Thursday night, you ought to have a raise.

I don't want a raise. Why? Because I found a pearl that includes everything I ever looked for in my life all wrapped up in one big pearl. The pearl of great price.

All in one big pearl. And that's Jesus and his will. Years ago, there was a Russian who had a large pearl, discovered a large pearl.

It was the size of an egg and shaped like a pear. Beautiful pearl. Few people within you had ever seen a pearl like he had.

The Tsar of Russia heard about it. Came to his home, tried to buy the pearl. The fellow built a house for the pearl.

One room house. Built a special table and a special box. He set the pearl in that box.

In the box on the table. And the table in this specially prepared house. The Tsar of Russia came to his home.

He took him inside the house. Took him to the table. Opened the box.

And there was the pearl. He wanted to buy it. It was not for sale.

This pearl of great price. One day, he was invited to go to Paris. The Duke of Brunswick wanted to see this pearl.

This man had the pearl in the box. The Duke of Brunswick came to his room and said, Me, I see the pearl. This man took this pearl he would not part with.

He was a millionaire because of this one pearl. He opened the box. The pearl was pale.

Pearls get sick like people do. And pearls die like people do. And this beautiful pearl was pale.

It was clouded. It had a disease unique to pearls. The man looked at it and screamed, I was a millionaire when I left home.

And I'm a pauper today. And soon the pearl became dust. But the pearl of great price.

He who is our Savior. Oh, the blessedness of serving Him. Oh, the joy of serving Him.

He whose reward never fades. He the pearl who never clouds. He the pearl who never changes.

I challenge you young people. I challenge you members of First Baptist Church. I challenge you college students.

I challenge you high schoolers. I challenge you children. Set your goal high.

Work toward that goal. Let nothing keep you from it. I challenge you to find the perfect will of God for your life.

In so doing, you found what our Lord meant when He said, the pearl of great price. Would you bow your heads please? Our Heavenly Father, I pray this morning that people shall say, I'm going to find the purpose for my existence. I pray that people who found that purpose will say, I'm going to do everything in my life to fulfill that purpose.

Diligence, work, tenacity, faithfulness, loyalty, labor. May it be found in their lives. I pray that the goal shall be a lofty one.

And I pray that goal shall be the perfect will of God. Our heads are bowed in prayer and our eyes are closed. I'm talking to folks this morning who have not yet found the purpose of God for your life.

I'm talking to folks this morning who have found it, but you have not set out to do everything to reach that goal. Would you be like that young man who said, I'm going to marry that girl. I'm going to be a preacher.

I'm going to marry that girl. Do it! Do it. But I'm talking to some this morning, eyes are closed back in the back, fellows.

I'm talking to some this morning who have never yet found Jesus. You have longed for sweet peace and for faith to increase and have earnestly, fervently prayed. But you shall only find rest, peace and be blessed, when all on the altar is laid.

This morning I'm talking to somebody who's never found Christ, never have been saved. You don't know that if you died today you'd go to heaven. You don't know that your name is written in heaven.

You're not saved. You're looking for something. You don't know it, but you're looking for the pearl of great price.

Everything you're seeking is found in that one pearl, Jesus Christ. Everything you want in life is found in that one pearl, Jesus Christ. Inside Him, the pearl of great price is joy.

Inside Him, the pearl of great price is peace. Inside Him, the pearl of great price is fulfillment. Inside Him, the pearl of great price is contentment.

Inside Him, the pearl of great price is happiness. Inside Him, the pearl of great price is satisfaction. Come to Him this morning.

Come to Him. Give your life to Jesus Christ. Make your decision to serve Him.

I wonder if all our heads are bowed how many would say, Brother Hiles, I don't have this pearl. I do not have this pearl of great price. I do not know that if I died today I would go to heaven, but I wish I did know it.

I'd like to be a Christian. I'd like to know that I'm saved. Pray for me.

Lift your hand, please, and I'll pray for you with every head bowed and every eye closed. You don't know that you're saved, but you wish you did. God bless you.

Raise your hand, please, in the balcony. God bless you. Other others, please, quickly.

God bless you, lady. God bless you, young lady. Who else would say, anywhere in the house, I need Jesus.

I need this pearl of great price. God bless you. God bless you in the choir.

Balcony. God bless you in the balcony. God bless you back here.

Yes, I see you. And God bless you back with a cabine. Who else would say, Brother Hiles, pray for me.

God bless you in the balcony. Who else? Pray for me. I want this pearl.

God bless you, lady. God bless you. Who else would say, Brother Hiles, God bless you here, and God bless the lady back here.

God bless you, sir. I see your hand. Who else would say, pray for me.

God bless you. I see that hand on my left. Who else in the house, anywhere, would say, pray for me.

I want to know this peace. God bless you, son. God bless you.

I see you, little lady. God bless you back in the back. I see you, son.

God bless you. Who else would say, yes, God bless you, little lady, and God bless those three or four in the balcony. God loves you.

Yes, I see you. Oh, this morning, yes, God bless you. I see you.

God bless you near the aisle. I see you. This morning, this pearl of great price.

You're looking for peace. You'll find it in Jesus, the pearl of great price. Looking for joy, you'll find it in Jesus, the pearl of great price.

Looking for enrichment in life, you'll find it in Jesus, the pearl of great price. Looking for satisfaction, you'll find it in Jesus, the pearl of great price. Who else would say, include me in the prayer? I want to know Jesus.

Pray for me. Would you lift your hand? Our Heavenly Father, I pray for every hand that was lifted and a soul heart represented. May this morning these say yes to God.

May it be so.

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