

Parables of Jesus - 02 Paying the Price

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of paying the price to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, requiring sacrifice, obedience, and a deep level of commitment.

Duration: 49:56

Scripture: Leviticus 26:8, Matthew 13:44, Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 4:26-29, Mark 16:15

Topics: "Parables"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the parables of Jesus in Mark's Gospel, specifically the parables related to paying the price to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. The first three parables discuss the importance of entering God's kingdom. However, the speaker emphasizes that entering the kingdom without paying the price will lead to problems. The speaker then delves into the parable of the seed, highlighting that the Christian life is a battle with Satan and that the enemy has more forces than believers. The sermon concludes with a call to discipleship, emphasizing the need for passionate love for Jesus, daily taking up one's cross, and forsaking all possessions.

Transcript

Okay, we're going to turn today to Mark's Gospel and Chapter 4. Continuing our study on the parables of Jesus, we come to parable number four. And we're going to look at six parables today, and they all come under the general heading of paying the price. Paying the price to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

In the first three parables, we saw that the subject was entering God's kingdom. That's the first step. But if you try to enter God's kingdom without paying the price, we're going to be facing problems sooner or later, like many Christians do.

So, Mark 4 verse 26 to 29, Jesus spoke a parable about how a seed is sown, and what happens all the way up to harvest time, from seed time to harvest. And he said here that the kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil. And he goes to bed at night, gets up by day, and the seed sprouts by itself and grows, how he himself does not know.

The soil produces crops, first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because harvest has come. That speaks of, you know, the seed of the word of God coming into our heart, and our being born again.

And then all the way up to maturity, which is becoming totally like Christ in our personality. So this parable is speaking about spiritual growth. It's not enough to be born again, we must grow spiritually until we become like Jesus Christ, completely.

That's God's goal. And this does not come by getting worried about it. This man, the farmer who sows the seed, does not get into a panic, does not stay up at night wondering whether the seed will grow.

No, he is at rest. And Jesus was saying that spiritual growth can take place best when your spirit is at rest. That's the picture here of a man going to bed at night.

And when a person is not at rest, he's not going to help his spiritual growth. Now a lot of Christians don't see the importance of being at rest spiritually at all times. The Old Testament Sabbath was a picture of the rest that God wants us to experience in our inner life, even though all types of things may be going on around us, we must not be in a panic.

We must be at rest in God because God will take care of that inner life and bring it forth to mature fruit. But we must follow the laws of the Spirit. You see the farmer, he puts fertilizer in, he pours water on the seed, and if we follow the simple laws of the Holy Spirit, we can be absolutely sure that God will bring us to maturity.

That doesn't happen overnight. You know when you sow a seed, it takes a long while before you get a tree. If you're planting a mango tree or a coconut tree, it takes a long time before you get the fruit, before it comes to maturity.

But you know it will definitely come. So we must not be impatient for spiritual growth. All that the farmer does is follow the laws of the vegetable kingdom.

We are to follow the laws of the Spirit. For example, the Bible says that God gives his grace to the humble. Grace is like heaven's rain.

And we need rain to get a good crop. But the Bible says that this grace is not received by everybody. God gives his grace to the humble.

To humble ourselves is like plowing up the ground and preparing the soil to receive the rain. So here's one of the laws of the Spirit. There are many more, but we could just think of one.

God gives his grace to the humble. I'll tell you one more. According to your faith, be it unto you.

We don't receive as much as we desire. We don't even receive as much as God wants to give us. We receive as much as we have faith for.

That's the law of the Spirit. So if we follow the simple laws of the Spirit, we can be at rest and seed will grow to maturity. Now we go to a second parable.

It's in Matthew's Gospel and chapter 13. Matthew 13 and verse 31 and 32. Here he spoke of another parable where he likened the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, which is a very small seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.

This is smaller than all the other seeds. But when it is grown, it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a huge tree. And the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

Now, whenever we try to interpret a parable, if you can find another parable where Jesus gave an interpretation, then we can use that interpretation. We don't have to use our clever minds to think up of some interpretation. Let me just mention one thing about parables.

We should not try to form some new doctrine out of a parable which is not clearly taught in Scripture. You see, clever people can think up all types of clever interpretations of these parables. Parables are like windows.

Because of these windows, you get light. But the window doesn't produce the light. The light is from the sun.

But it comes through a window. So a parable is like a window. It doesn't give light itself.

But the light of truth, which is found in other parts of Scripture, can come through that window and we get light. So we should never try to get a new doctrine out of a parable which is not taught anywhere else in Scripture. So what does this mean? We know that Jesus, just a few verses earlier, spoke about the birds of the air in verse 4 of the same chapter.

And he explained in verse 19 that the birds of the air were the agents of Satan. So we accept that interpretation. We believe that verse 32, the birds of the air are the agents of Satan who've come and settled down in this tree.

How did that happen? Now, a normal mustard tree grows only up to a height of 10 or 11 feet, which is not much higher than where my hand is right now. That's not the largest of all the trees. Certainly not.

In fact, it would be one of the smallest of all the trees. But how did this tree, which is meant to be by God, meant by God only to be 10 or 11 feet high, suddenly become 30 feet high or 40 feet high? That's because man did something, maybe with various methods. Man's very clever.

To make it grow beyond the size that God intended it to be. And then what happens? It becomes a huge tree and the leaves are huge, spread out widely. And then it is that the birds of the air find it a very convenient place to come and make their nests.

Have you ever seen a bird make its nest in small little trees? Never. The birds have got more sense. They know that if they make their nests in little trees, men will come and steal their eggs and it's not safe.

They like huge trees. And the devil's clever too. It's a picture of people trying to make God's work bigger by human methods, sacrificing divine principles because they want to make something which is impressive in the eyes of men.

Jesus said that the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. How narrow is that gate? Jesus said the gate is so narrow that one rich young ruler could not go through because the size of that gate was the size of a needle's eye. You know how big a needle's eye is? That's the size of the narrow gate.

And Jesus said that immediately after the rich young ruler left, he explained to his disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom because he was proud of his riches or he trusted in his riches. And riches need not be only money. A man could be rich in intelligence, gift, talent, family background, so many things.

But wherever a man has got this human wealth which he thinks is very important, which he thinks makes him superior to others, he can't go through the needle's eye. So what do preachers do? For example, when the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he had so many qualifications that would make him acceptable to most Christian pastors today. First of all, he was rich.

Who would not like to have a rich man in his church? Secondly, he was young. I mean, we don't want 85-year-old people joining our church. We'd like young 20-year-olds joining our church.

Then he was a ruler, a man of influence. Who would not like to have a man of influence in his church? And he was a very upright man because he told Jesus, I've kept all the commandments from the time I was young. How many people do you find like that? And fifth, he was seeking for eternal life.

How many rich young rulers who lived a moral upright life are seeking for eternal life? Any church would receive him except Jesus Christ. He said, you don't fit in because you love money. Have you ever heard of a church saying you can't be a member of our church because you love money? It's very rare to find a church like that.

But Jesus' church was like that. He made the gate so narrow that this man who lived such an upright life could not go in because he was not willing to pay the price of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. And therefore, Jesus never made his group bigger than God intended it to be.

Now that's a great temptation because, you know, when we have numbers, we can impress people with our statistics. We can look down at a church which has got only 25 members and say we have got 500. But that may be one of these big mustard trees which have got all these birds of the air sitting here and there.

Now, if all 500 are disciples, that's excellent. If you have 5,000 member church and all 5,000 are disciples, excellent. Because Jesus said, go and make disciples.

Not just somebody who raises his hand in a meeting or signs a decision card and says I've accepted Christ. Is he a disciple? Has he gone through the narrow gate? Would you, if you were a pastor of a church, would you let that rich young ruler join your church whom Jesus said no to? It's a very searching question. John chapter 6 is an amazing chapter.

It begins with a great multitude following Jesus. Great multitude, John 6 verse 2. And it ends in verse 70 with 11 people. How can you reduce a great multitude to 11 people? Jesus was a great expert at that.

Sifting. He knew that many of them were not interested in discipleship. He told them.

He says, you're not seeking me because you want to follow me. You're seeking me because you got food. Verse 26.

And he told them that this is not the main thing. Don't waste your time for verse 27 for this, these earthly things that perish. And then he spoke to them about taking up the cross.

And dying to themselves. Which is what he meant in John 6 and verse 56 about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. And when they heard this, many, listen to this, many of his disciples, verse 60, got offended and they withdrew.

And they said, this is a difficult statement, verse 66, many of his disciples. We are not talking about the Jews now. No.

These are people who became, who wanted to be externally at least his disciples. And Jesus spoke such hard words that they went away and he was left with 11 people. And in those 11 people, the birds of the air could not find a place.

You know that Judas Iscariot got in but he got exposed. So that's how our church must be. Our church must be a fellowship in which not a single bird can come and settle down.

And if you have grace to build a 500 member church like that, praise the Lord. But it's better to go for quality than for quantity. That's the message of this parable.

And certainly we see the need in a country like India where the name of the Lord is so dishonored. Not because we are only 2% or 3%. No, that's not the reason.

You think the name of the Lord would have been honored in India if all of India's Christians, the same type of Christians became 50%? No. It's the quality of the lives of Christians in India that has brought dishonor to God's name. There are many birds that are sitting in many of our churches in every denomination.

They become so huge and they have sacrificed quality. We go now to parable number 3 and that's in Luke's Gospel chapter 14. Luke's Gospel chapter 14 and verses 28 to 30, we read here about building a tower.

In verse 28, he said, if some of you want to build a tower, any one of you, a tower, won't you first sit down and calculate the cost? Think if you wanted to just build a building like this one. You'd first sit down and calculate the cost. And if you don't sit down and calculate the cost and you say, well, we'll go along as and when the bills come, we'll pay for them.

You may end up only laying the foundation because you don't have money to build such a huge building. So Jesus was saying, it's the same thing in a sense. Why do you want to build such a huge building if you don't have the money for it? Any sensible person, if he would see, well, how much money do I have? Well, that fellow's got a 10 bedroom house, but I don't have that much money.

I want to build a good house, not just a huge foundation. Now, in our last study, we saw the importance of the foundation. The first things in the Christian life, we got to repent and believe and obey God's word.

Now, on this foundation, Jesus said, you must build a superstructure. Nobody builds a foundation and leaves it there. You can't live on a foundation.

People who build a house, they lay a foundation and then build on it. And this is the second stage. Jesus was speaking about building this tower.

And he said here about calculating the cost to see if I am willing to pay the price. Do I want to spend all the money I have in my bank to build this house? Or do I want to spend only 10% of it to build a house? That's the question that comes to us. Do you want to give 10% of your life to the Lord and be a disciple of Jesus? The Lord says, sorry, you can't do that.

You'll only be able to lay a foundation with that. You have to give everything. You have to give all your life.

Sit down and decide, first of all, whether you want to give everything. You want to say, my Lord, take my time, my money, my energy, my life, my future, my ambitions, my everything. Then you can build a house.

Otherwise, what will happen is you lay a foundation, you'll start off in a wonderful way like a lot of believers have started in a wonderful way with great zeal to lay the foundation. And then after some time they discover this Christian life is a little more difficult than they thought it was. And they stop.

It's like people who give up the race. It's the same picture. They don't complete the building.

Not because they don't have the price. They're not willing to pay the price. That's the reason why many Christians don't complete the tower.

And what is the meaning here? See, whenever you read Scripture, let me tell you a simple principle in Bible study that whenever you study Scripture, always read a verse in its context. What does the context say? So, to understand this parable, you must see the context. The context is discipleship.

He spoke, this is the most important section on discipleship in the entire New Testament. Luke chapter 14, verse 25 to 35 is the most important section on discipleship. Why is this important? Because Jesus told his apostles, when you go into every nation, make disciples, not converts.

That applies to India. For many years in my Christian life, after I became a Christian worker, I made converts. A time came in my life when I got fed up because these converts were backsliding pretty quickly.

And then I took seriously the commission of Jesus in Matthew 28, verse 18. Make disciples. There are two great commissions.

Mark 16, going to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The other side of the great commission is Matthew 28, verse 19, make them into disciples. There are multitudes obeying Mark 16, 15, going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature.

Very few are making them into disciples. If you see a hundred people carrying a heavy log of wood, 99 people at one end, and one person at the other end, which end will you go and help? If you have some sense. Where do you think the emphasis is today in India on preaching the gospel to every creature or making disciples? On Mark 16 or Matthew 28? It's because the emphasis is mostly or generally or more than 90% being only on Mark 16 that we have the shallow Christianity in India and all over the world today.

Jesus said, teach people to sit down and count the cost. They got to be disciples. Who is a disciple? Verse 26, one who loves Jesus more than father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children and his own life.

Why did Jesus use the word hate in verse 26? It means compared to your love for Jesus, your love for your parents and your wife and children must be so small that it's almost like hatred. To use an illustration, we see stars in the sky now because it is dark. When the sun rises tomorrow morning, the stars are still there but you can't see them.

That's the picture that our love for Jesus is so great like the sun shining that this wee tiny star of my love for my father and mother and another star of my love for my wife and another star of my love for my children becomes darkness in the light of my passionate, fervent love for Jesus Christ. Only such a person is a disciple. Secondly, verse 27, he must be a person who takes up his cross every day and follows Jesus.

He must be one who is willing to die to his own rights, his reputation and his own ambitions and everything every day if he is to be a disciple. And number three, verse 33, he must forsake all his possessions. That doesn't mean he has to be a hermit or a sanyasi or a sadhu who lives just with his clothes in the forest or jungle.

No, we're talking about possessions in verse 33. Possessions are what you possess not what you have. If I possess something and say that is mine, I won't share it with anybody, I won't give it to God, I won't give it away, I won't give it to anyone, you can't be a disciple.

You have to withdraw your hand and give it up to God just like Abraham gave up Isaac. Until that day on Mount Moriah, Abraham possessed Isaac. But once he offered him up to God on that mountain, after that, he had Isaac.

He never possessed him. Isaac was still living in his tent. But there's no longer that possessive love for his son.

And everything we have on earth, we must lay on the altar like Abraham offered up Isaac to God and said, Lord, this is yours. God says, okay, keep it, use it for me. After that, if you have a house, you say, well, that house belongs to God.

He's allowed me to live in it free of rent even though your name may be in the owner of the house. But you say, Lord, it's not mine. It's yours.

You can use it any way you like for yourself, for your people. If you have a vehicle, you have money, it's all God's. I don't possess anything even though I have them.

So, I'm not a hermit. But I don't cling to my house or my property or my anything. Only such a person is a disciple.

These three conditions of discipleship. Now, when a person fulfills these three conditions, he's a disciple. And then he becomes like salt, verse 34, which is good.

You know the tremendous power of a little bit of salt to change the taste of a whole bowl of curry. As soon as you taste it, you know whether there's salt in it or not. And Jesus said, you're the salt of the earth.

And how much salt do you need to put in a bowl of curry to change its taste? You don't need a cup full of salt. You won't be able to eat it. You put very little.

Very little. Less than 2%. Are we 2% Christians in India? Less than 2% is enough if the salt is good.

But if the salt is not good, if it's tasteless, why is it tasteless? Because they were not made into disciples. They were just made converts and statistics to impress people. We wrote reports that 1,000 people were saved here and 5,000 were saved there and so many people raised their hands.

So many people wrote decision cards. We changed their names. We baptized them.

We called them Christians. 95% of them are not disciples. What happens? It is salt which is tasteless.

Jesus says, it's useless. Verse 35, useless. So all this is involved in building this tower so that it rises for the glory of God.

Now we come to another parable which is also here. That is parable number 7. Luke 14, verse 31 to 32. Here he speaks about a king.

Notice again, this parable is also in the context of discipleship. In the middle of this teaching on discipleship, Jesus spoke two parables and both relate to discipleship. When a king goes out to meet another king in battle, won't he first sit down? Notice this one thing.

Jesus said, in both parables concerning discipleship, sit down. We usually tell people in evangelistic meetings to stand up. I usually tell them to sit down and say, you count the cost.

Go home, count the cost and come back and tell me tomorrow whether you want to pay the price. Don't be in a hurry. You know, if we are very eager for results, we'll force people to stand up.

But Jesus said, sit down. Sit down, verse 28. Sit down, verse 31.

Sit down and calculate. Am I strong enough with 10,000 soldiers to fight against this enemy who's coming with 20,000 soldiers? Now supposing you are a... Those days king used to lead people to battle. Now it's a general.

Supposing a general's got 20,000 soldiers and the enemy is coming with 20,000... He's got 10,000 soldiers. The enemy is coming with 20,000. Any sensible general will sit down and say, well, let me find out whether I'm strong enough to fight against this man.

Otherwise, while the enemy is still far away, verse 32, let me send a delegation and say, I surrender. Let's not fight and unnecessarily kill people. What is the meaning of this parable? The Christian life is a battle.

That's the first thing we learn from this parable. It's not a picnic. It's a battle right from the day you're born again till the day Jesus comes.

This battle never ceases. It's a battle with Satan. That's the first thing we see.

The second thing we learn from this parable is that the enemy has got more forces than we have. Have you got any doubt about that? Do you think the Lord Jesus has got more agents in the world or Satan has got more agents? You know the answer. Satan has got not only double... In this parable, it's only double.

He's got hundreds times more than Jesus Christ. When I see the dedication with which Satan's servants serve him, I'm ashamed at my own dedication to Christ many times. When I see how devoted businessmen are to make money, I say, am I devoted as much to build a church? That man dreams about money at night.

What do I dream about at night? Is it about the kingdom of God? Am I as devoted? Satan's got many devoted agents in many fields, in the field of entertainment, pornography, prostitution, money making, bribing, cheating, stealing. He's got millions of agents in the world and he's got all the demons. And here we are, the church of Jesus Christ, disciples of Christ, a much, much, much smaller group trying to fight against him.

What shall we do? Shall we ask for peace? No. We do not ask for peace. What Jesus was saying is, if these few people are really disciples, then it's no problem.

It doesn't matter if it's only a few. Let me show you a verse in Leviticus chapter 26, while the Lord promised the Israelites. Leviticus chapter 26 and verse 8. This was a promise that the Lord gave the Israelites before they went into Canaan.

Wonderful promise. Five of you will chase a hundred enemies. That means you can drive away twenty times the number of people you are if God is with you.

And not only that, a hundred of you will chase ten thousand. That becomes a hundred times. Not twenty times, a hundred times.

And later on, when they entered the land of Canaan, Joshua told them, he said actually what happened was even better than what God promised in Leviticus. He said in Joshua chapter 23, he said in Leviticus, the Lord gave a proportion of five to a hundred, a hundred to ten thousand, a hundred times. But he says actually what happened was, Joshua 23 verse 9 and 10.

See what happened. If one man is a disciple, think of this, one thousand demons will flee in front of such a man. Demons will be scared of such a man because the Lord stands with him.

But if he's not a disciple, if he's a man who loves money, who's living for this world, living for himself, he's got his own ambitions, he lives with dirty thoughts, he's careless with his tongue, and he's just a religious person who studies the Bible. And no demons gonna be scared of him. My dear brothers and sisters, how many of you are interested in being a frontline soldier in this battle? It's the most exciting battle you can ever fight.

And when you fight in this battle, the Christian life is never boring. My Christian life is not boring. I've been a believer 43 years, Christian life is not boring for me.

It's exciting every day. Come into the frontline and you'll find you never get bored, you never get depressed, because you're excited when thousand people flee in your presence. So we don't seek for peace, we don't seek for any peace with the devil.

We submit to God and resist the devil and he flees from us. Remember one thing, before I move on. The promises that Jesus made are only for disciples.

Have you had this experience? Where you go to a promise in the New Testament that Jesus made and you try to claim it and it doesn't work. And then another time you try to claim it and it doesn't work. And then you try to claim some other promise and that doesn't work.

And you begin to wonder, why is that? Shall I tell you why? The promises were made for disciples. If you're not a disciple, the promise is not for you. When you get a money, when the postman comes with a money order, he can't give it to you if your name is not on it.

I mean, maybe a lot of money. And say, I'd like to have it. And say, sorry, your name is not there.

In the same way, there can be promises in Scripture, wonderful promises. Are you a disciple? And it's for you. If you're not a disciple, you're just one of those who want to go to heaven when you die.

Or you want to get some benefit out of being a Christian or a Christian worker or something like that. Promises are not for you, sorry. They're for disciples.

So it's a wonderful thing to be a disciple. I'm talking about spiritual blessings. Material blessings God gives to everybody.

He makes the sun to rise and the good and the evil. If you want material blessings, good and evil, both people get it. Righteous and unrighteous, both get it.

But spiritual blessings, the eternal blessings, are only for disciples. And now we go to parable number 8, Matthew chapter 13 and verse 44. Matthew 13.

See, all these parables have got the same theme, paying the price. Matthew 13 verse 44, Jesus said, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and hid. And from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Now we may have had the impression that everything in the New Testament is free. You know how human beings are. We always like to get things free.

And we have heard the gift of God is eternal life. You can't buy it. It's free.

Forgiveness of sins. That's free. The gift of the Holy Spirit.

That's free. But there are certain things in the Christian life which are not free. You have to pay a price for it.

And that's why he said here about buying. Did you notice that word? You got to buy this field. You can't get it free.

And how much do you have to pay for it? What does it say? All that you have. Boy, that's an expensive field. If you have to pay everything that you have.

But the kingdom of God is like that. You can't get God's best if you don't give everything. If you hold back something, you're not going to get God's best.

You're not going to get his kingdom. And that's the reason why many people don't experience the fullness of joy and righteousness and victory and peace and overcoming that God wants all his children to experience. They don't give all that they have.

Notice this. All that you have to buy this field. You remember what Jesus said to the elder in Laodicea and to the church in Laodicea.

Revelation chapter 3. These were believers. I mean, if they were not believers, you can't call them a church. You know that.

I mean, today there are a lot of people who call themselves part of a church who are not believers, but not in the first century. And the elder of the church in Laodicea was certainly a born-again, spirit-baptized believer. In those days, everybody... Anyway, a lot of people spoke in tongues.

He must have been a tongue-speaking, spirit-baptized believer. But the Lord tells him, in spite of all this, you are wretched, verse 17. You are miserable.

You are poor, spiritually. You're blind. And you're naked.

Can a born-again, spirit-baptized, elder of a church, be poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked? Now, we wouldn't think that today. We'd think it's all those nominal Christians. It's all those unconverted priests who are like that.

No. Here's a man who's supposed to be born again. Here's a man who's supposed to be spirit-filled.

But... Wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked. Maybe when he started out, he was good, wholehearted. But somewhere along the way, like it happens with many Christians, they begin to compromise somewhere.

They begin to lower their standards. They don't listen to their conscience as much as they did at the beginning. And gradually, they become backsliders.

Even though they may be still elders in a church. And so the Lord told him, there's only one way. You can recover from this.

See, that's the wonderful news of the Gospel. From this wretched condition, you can recover. But, how do you recover? That's the thing.

Verse 18. You have to buy something. Again, that word, buy.

It's not free. You have to pay a price. The Lord says, I advise you to pay the price and buy this gold refined by fire from me.

This white garment and this eye salve so that you're no more naked, you're no more poor, and you're no more blind. So we see that Jesus spoke about buying. So that's very, very important.

And it says here, coming back to Matthew 13, 44. What is this treasure hidden in a field which this man found? It could refer to a victorious Christian life. I know I discovered victorious Christian life about 16 years after I was born again.

I didn't know that sin need not have dominion over me. When I found it, it was like a treasure hidden in a field which it says here, for the joy that he had. Boy, can I live such a life? And the word of God says, yes.

But, it says here, he had to sell all that he had to come into this life. That's one thing that we have in the kingdom of God. The Bible says the kingdom of God is righteousness, Romans 14, 17, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

A life of victory, a life of constant peace, and a life of perpetual joy in the Holy Spirit's power. Are you willing to pay all that you have for this? It's hidden. It's not on the surface.

This man was digging, and he found it, hey. And he said, it's worth it. I tell you, it's worth it.

Now we come to the last parable for today, number 9, verse 45 and 46 of Matthew 13. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. And upon finding one pearl of great value, again you find this expression, he bought it.

He did not get it free. He bought it. And what was the price he had to pay for it? All that he had, verse 46.

I want to tell you, these things are not cheap. I know in the market you can get pearls, which are cheap, but they'll be counterfeit pearls. The real pearl is expensive.

If you get a cheap diamond, don't waste your time buying it unless you want to impress other people. You know women who wear these artificial diamonds and impress people who don't know what diamonds look like. And they think this person is a very rich person.

It's only glass. Don't be fooled. And some people have a Christianity like that.

Looks very impressive. They fast so many days. They pray.

They speak so well. It's only glass. It's not diamonds.

Don't be fooled. It's not real pearls. You got to be an expert to detect a real diamond from glass.

You got to be an expert to detect a real pearl from a counterfeit one. A lot of counterfeits. Do you think there's no counterfeit baptism in the Holy Spirit today? Plenty.

How do we identify? It's cheap. That's the way you identify it even if you're not an expert. If it was cheap.

If you got something cheap you can be pretty sure it is counterfeit. Sure. That's the way.

I'm not an expert at pearls and diamonds but I say if it's cheap I know it's not the real thing. Because a really expensive pearl you can't get it cheap and real Christianity you can't get it cheap. No.

You got to pay a price. Did you pay a price for the Christianity you have? This pearl of great price is not a thing. This pearl of great price is Jesus Christ himself.

So it means to value Jesus Christ so much that everything else in the world like we sing in that song and the things of earth grow strangely dim Turn your eyes upon Jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. This man had no problem paying the price because he wanted it so badly. Now there was one difference between this man and the previous man.

It says in verse 44 the other man just found it accidentally he wasn't looking for it. And sometimes God in his great grace and sovereignty allows us to discover something which we were not even looking for. But this man was different.

He went seeking. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. God is not going to reward people who don't diligently seek him.

Jeremiah 29 verse 13 says if you will seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart when you're willing to pay the whole price when you're willing to sell all that you have and say Lord this pearl of great price is worth it. Jesus Christ is worth it. There's a song that we sing which says it'll be worth it all when we see Jesus.

All the suffering we went through on earth all the bad names people called us all the difficulties we went through all the trials all the misunderstandings and all the things we had to give up of comfort and ease on this earth it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. One look at his face and I will forget all the sorrows and difficulties I had on earth. Let me turn you in closing to Philippians in chapter 3. Philippians chapter 3 the price that Paul paid in order to get Christ.

Philippians 3 verse 8 to 10 he says I count all things as loss for the excellency surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things notice the word all things all things and I count it all as rubbish that I may gain Christ. Paul got the real thing. How do we know? He paid a big price for it.

All that he had accumulated through his life of righteousness and holiness and his knowledge and his pride in this and pride in that trash, garbage. He found Jesus. This is real Christianity.

Let's pray. Make a decision tonight dear friends make a decision that you will pay any price for the genuine thing that you'll never be happy with a counterfeit Christianity or a counterfeit baptism in the Holy Spirit or counterfeit gifts of the Holy Spirit that you'll never be satisfied with building a church of converts it'll be a church of disciples be willing to pay the price because what you get back from God will be a million times more than what you pay. Heavenly Father help us to be convinced of the truth of your word that we can respond and not be fools but be wise to give up the trash that we have in order to receive the riches of heaven.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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