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The Parable of the Pearl

Matthew 13: 45-46

The parable of the pearl DIG: How does this parable couple with the parable of the Hidden Treasure? Whom does each parable represent? How so? Where do we find that in the Scriptures? With what emotion and energy should it be pursued? If the parables were given so that the faithful could understand them, what prevented Messiah's talmidim from fully understanding the parable of the Pearl when they first heard it? How did Yeshua expose some assumptions on the part of His Jewish listeners.

REFLECT: Have you ever made an investment without first counting the cost? How does that relate to spiritual matters? Are you all-in, or are you hedging your bet?

The one major point of the parable of the Pearl is that Gentiles will also come to a saving knowledge of the Messiah and are grafted into the invisible universal Church.

The third couplet is comprised of the parables of **the Hidden Treasure** (Isra'el) and **the Pearl** (Gentiles), which show that **the dividing wall of hostility** has been **torn down by the Messiah (Ephesians 2:14 HCSB)** and Jews and **Gentiles** together form **the invisible universal Church**. **Jesus** is no longer in front of a crowd by the Sea of Galilee, but alone with **His** talmidim in **Peter's house**.

While the Bible reveals that the parable of **the Hidden Treasure** represents Isra'el, it does not state exactly what **the pearl** represents. However, when it is used symbolically, the implication is that it represents the **Gentiles** for two reasons. First, it would provide the resulting contrast with the Jews in the previous parable, because **the** mystery **Kingdom** includes both Jews and **Gentiles**. Secondly, the pearl originates in the sea, a common symbol of **the goyim (Dani'el 7:23; Revelation 17:1 and 15)**.⁷¹⁸



Continuing **His** teaching **in the house**, **Jesus** taught another parable, saying: **Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When He found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it (Mt 13:45-46)**. Obviously **the merchant** considered that particular **pearl** to have been worth more than all **his** other pearls combined, because they would have been included in the sale of all **he** had.

At the time **Yeshua** gave **the Twelve** these parables in the house of **Peter**, **they** didn't fully understand their meaning any more than **they** understood why **Christ** had to die on the cross. Especially such mysteries as **the Gentiles** being **grafted into the nourishing olive tree of Isra'el (Romans 11:17-25)**. In fact, **Messiah** had to explain **the parable of the Weeds** to them. But, the parables had valuable insights nonetheless because after **Christ** had ascended to the Father **they** would remember **His words** and would more fully understand them at that time. For example, after **Jesus** had cleared **the Temple** Courts at the beginning of **His** ministry the Jews asked for a sign to prove **His** authority to do such a thing. **Jesus answered them: Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days.** They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the Temple He had spoken of was His body. After He was raised from the dead, His talmidim recalled what He had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words Jesus had spoken (John 2:13-22).

This parable makes two sub points. First, the wounds of **Christ** purchased the **Gentiles** of **the invisible universal Church**. Secondly, **they** are formed by gradual accretion, the process by which a **pearl** develops when a foreign substance falls into the oyster. The oyster begins covering this speck, and covering it, and covering it, until it gradually becomes a **pearl**. One of the primary purposes of **the Church** is **to call out from among the Gentiles a people for His name until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled** (see my commentary on **Revelation, to see link click An - The Times of the Gentiles**). This is indeed pictured by this parable.⁷¹⁹

In relating **His** parables, **Yeshua** exposed some assumptions on the part of **His** Jewish listeners. **The rabbis teach that all Isra'el has a share in the world to come.** They believed they were destined to gain entrance in **the kingdom of Heaven** just because they were Jewish. These parables cautioned them not to take **the Kingdom** for granted. Only those who perceive its immeasurable value and are willing to sacrifice **everything** will enter. Note that the **man** who found **the treasure** sold all **he** owned out of sheer joy (**Matthew 13:44**; also see **Philippians 3:7-8**). That is how it is with salvation. To the unregenerate mind, the thought of yielding everything to **Yeshua ha-Meshiach** is absurd. A believing heart, however, surrenders to **the Savior of Sinners** with great joy. The splendid freedom from sin and the unending blessings of eternal life (see **Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**) far surpass the cost of surrender to **God's** authority.

He went away and sold everything he had. Does this parable teach that sinners must stop sinning before coming to **Christ**? No. What they do mean is that saving faith retains no privileges. **Jesus** wants all of you. Saving faith clings to no favorite sins, no treasured possessions, no secret pleasures. It is unconditional surrender, a willingness to do anything **the Lord** asks. Eternal life is a free gift (**Romans 6:23**). But, that doesn't mean there is no cost. **Yeshua** has already paid the ransom with **His** blood. The paradox is this: salvation is both free and costly. Clearly, a new believer does not fully understand all the consequences of the lordship of **Messiah** at the moment of faith (see **Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**). The true believer, however, has a desire to surrender. That is what separates true trust from a phony profession. True faith is humble, submissive and obedient. As spiritual understanding grows, that obedience grows deeper and every child of **the Kingdom** demonstrates an eagerness to please our **Savior** by abandoning **everything** to **His** lordship. It's the unavoidable expression of **the new creation (Second Corinthians 5:17)**.

The parables of **the Hidden Treasure** and **the Pearl** are a clear warning those who would commit without counting the cost first. **The Master** cautioned the fickle multitudes to **count the cost** carefully before following **Him (Luke 14:28-33)**. Wise investors usually do not put all their money into a single investment. But, that's exactly what the men in these two parables did. The first man **sold everything** and bought one **field**, and the second man **sold everything** and bought one **pearl**. But, they had **counted the cost**, they knew what they bought was worth the supreme investment. Once more, this is a perfect illustration of saving faith. Those who truly believe in **the Lord** do not hedge their bets. Knowing the cost of discipleship, the true believer makes a commitment and gives **everything** to **Jesus Christ**.⁷²⁰

The nine parables we have looked at develop a basic flow of thought: (1) **The Parable of the Soils (Et)** teaches that there will be a sowing of the Gospel throughout the Church Age. (2) **The Parable of the Seed Growing By Itself (Eu)** teaches that the Gospel seed will have an inner energy so that it will spring to life on its own. (3) **The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (Ev)** teaches that the true sowing will be imitated by a false counter-sowing. (4) **The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Ew)** teaches that the visible Church will assume abnormal outer growth. (5) **The Parable of the Leaven (Ex)** teaches that the doctrine of the visible church will be corrupted. (6) **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Fb)** teaches that even with the doctrinal corruption, a remnant will be saved out of Isra'el. (7) **The Parable of the Pearl (Fc)** teaches that the Gentiles of the invisible universal Church will also come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles together, the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl form the invisible universal Church.