

## Return or Loss: Making the Right Investment



*The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price*

## Let's Translate...

Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν  
ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοῦς  
μαργαρίτας· εὕρων δὲ ἓνα πολὺτιμον  
μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα  
εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν.

NRSV – "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

NET – "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it."

## Comparison: Treasure & Pearl

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ~ Matthew 13:44 (NRSV)

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ~ Matthew 13:45-46 (NRSV)

## For those who need the Greek

Ὅμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν  
θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὕρων ἄνθρωπος  
εἰκροῦσεν, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει  
καὶ πωλεῖ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον. ~ ν.44

Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν  
ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοῦς μαργαρίτας· εὕρων δὲ ἓνα πολὺτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν. ~ ν.45-46

## So what is this parable saying...

- How might the disciples have reacted to this parable?
- What is the kingdom in this parable? Who is the merchant? What is the pearl?
- Yesterday we talked about the "cost" of discipleship. Does the parable of the pearl (and the treasure) deal with the cost of discipleship? Does it parallel Luke 14.28-30, 31-33?

## So what is this parable saying... Part Two

- "Whatever or whoever the pearls and the merchant are, the point of these last two parables is the value of being the part of the kingdom." Do you agree/disagree?
- Capon understands both parables to be about the church. He states (this is a paraphrase) that followers of Christ should not "scare" people out of buying their own pearls, but that they seek out the most valuable pearl for themselves. Eventually, and hopefully, they will find that perfect pearl. What do you think of this? By seeking, are we "doing?" Is it about God's actions or our actions?

When we are "hit" by the news of God's kingdom (when we find that perfect pearl) should we act quickly upon it?

Or is God already acting quickly for us?



## Gospel of Thomas

Jesus says: "The Kingdom of the Father is like a man, a merchant, who has a burden and found a pearl. This merchant is a wise man: he sold the bundle and bought the pearl alone. You also seek his treasure which does not perish, which lasts, into which the moth does not enter to consume and <where> the worm does not destroy."

## Aesop's Fables, Part 1

### The Cock and the Pearl

A cock was once strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he espied something shinning amid the straw. "Ho! ho!" quoth he, "that's for me," and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw. What did it turn out to be but a Pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard? "You may be a treasure," quoth Master Cock, "to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls."

Precious things are for those that can prize them.

*The Pearl of Great Price*  
– published 1864 by Sir John Everett Millais, Bt



Can you find the pearl?



*Pearl of Great Value*  
– Ian Pollack

Any Interpretations?  
(Because it confuses me!)

Is the universe God's kingdom?

Is the universe the pearl?

## Cosmic Revelations

What is "creation?"  
The earth, or the whole universe?

