

## The Value of God

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

**Matthew 13:44-46**

Everyone places different prices on different things. Everyone treasures something. When a man treasures and values what is worth very little, we call it a wasted life. When someone treasures what is valuable, we call it a noble life, an honourable life. What you treasure and what you value determines who you are, what you are becoming, and where you will end up.

If you are spending your precious life treasuring what is not valuable, you are wasting your life. If you are spending your life treasuring what is most valuable, you are using your life in the best possible way, and living life as it was meant to be. Well, who or what is most valuable? The answer is that God, as revealed to us in Jesus Christ, is most valuable. Treasuring Him above all things is the right way to spend your life.

We hear a lot about worship these days. Worship is from the Old English word 'worthship.' It is a display of what we think God is worth. Our worship is not our singing. It is our life's estimate of the value of God.

Do you know the whole Bible is about this? The glory of God is just another way of saying the value or excellence of God. God's glory is His value – all His attributes, their sum total. And all that God does, He does to display His value. Therefore, all that we do should be to know and display His value.

Our worship is our appreciation of how much God is worth, and our expression of how much God is worth. Worshipping God, or loving Him, is the centre point of our lives, because it is what displays God's preciousness.

The Lord Jesus in Mathew 13 uses two simple parables to illustrate the truth of worship. He describes it as the kingdom of heaven – meaning the whole state of being a Christian, of knowing God. In both parables, Jesus likens knowing God to something very precious. In the one it is treasure. In the other it is a pearl. The idea is that God Himself in Jesus Christ is exceedingly valuable, more precious than any other pursuit in life.

In these parables, He gives us three things concerning our worship, our treasuring of God.

### **1. You worship God by how much you seek after Him**

In the first parable, we see that the treasure is hid, and the man finds it. That implies he was searching for it. Treasure hidden in a field is not something you stumble over; it is something you dig for. So here is someone who knows about some treasure somewhere in a field, and because of its value, spends much time and effort trying to find it, seeking after it.

In the second parable, we have a merchant, seeking valuable pearls. That is how he is described: *'seeking.'* He trades, and buys and sells and trades, until he finds that one of superior value.

The idea here is that something's value is seen and shown by how much you seek after it. Consider what people seek after. Some spend hour after hour at work or at business, far more than necessary – because they are seeking more money. Their diligence exalts the value of money – for that kind of seeking, it must be worth a lot.

Others spend hours perfecting a certain skill or ability or sport, seeking success and possibly fame. As they do that – it says to everyone, success must be precious, for them to seek so hard after it. Others go to the ends of the earth to find that special extra stamp or painting or antique to add to their collection. Some will save to buy that gadget, or that car, or that piece of clothing. So much time, and effort and money spent finding and locating things in the collection must mean it is worth a lot.

Sometimes it is someone's heart. When seeking the love of someone else, some will take effort to buy gifts, write poems, give cards, sing songs. And it says to that person, and to everyone else, *'your heart, your love, is valuable to me.'*

And so we could list countless other things in human life – the more someone seeks after something – the more its value seems to rise in the eyes of others. Let me say: it does not actually increase its value, but it appears to. If a man seeks after filthy websites, it does not make those website valuable. But because there is a man seeking after it, it seems to say – this thing has value, it has a reward. You can seek after quite worthless and futile things – it doesn't make them valuable, except in your own eyes.

But the kingdom of heaven – knowing God through Jesus Christ – is of ultimate value. Knowing God is of far more value than anything this life can give us. Such that the Psalmist said, *"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee"* (**Psalm 73:25**).

Throughout Jesus' ministry we have examples of seekers. The wise men trekked across deserts on a dangerous journey to reach the baby Jesus. When some men wanted their paralysed friend healed, and couldn't get to Jesus because of the great crowd, they broke through the roof and lowered him down.

When a Syrophenician woman wanted her daughter healed, but Jesus seemed to put her off, she persisted, saying, *"Yes, Lord, even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table,"* (**Matthew 15:27**). When blind Bartimaeus heard Jesus was coming by, he cried out, *"Have mercy on us, Son of David"* (**Luke 18:38**). Even when he was told to be quiet – he kept crying out, till he was healed. Zacchaeus climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus.

What this shows is that they were seeking because they believed Jesus was so valuable, so precious, they would not stop until they had found Him and received grace from Him. Their efforts, their seeking, was fully directed toward Jesus, and what it said was: knowing and finding Jesus is precious. He is valuable. He is worth much.

Examples of how we can practice this in our everyday lives include seeking His face in prayer, asking God for strength, searching His Word for answers and wisdom, searching the Word for God Himself, seeking His direction, seeking His provision and protection, wanting to learn

and know more about His ways; desiring His presence, and seeking His hand and His works. A biblical view of seeking entails doing so with all our heart, with diligence, with agonising, labouring, toiling and with all His grace – in order to be rewarded with finding. The more valuable the treasure, the more earnest the search.

What you are seeking after reflects what you are becoming. What you are pursuing is largely the explanation of what your character will look like in the future. For example, when a man takes an increasing interest in control – he is becoming corrupted by power. But if you are seeking after God in Jesus Christ, you will find that which is most precious, and will become more like Him. But Jesus also highlights in this passage a second aspect of worship.

## **2. You worship God by how much you delight in Him**

We read in the first parable, ‘and for joy thereof’. This man had great delight and joy in his find. His treasure was seen not only in how much he looked for it, but in how much he rejoiced over it. The value of something is not fully advertised, until you see the reaction of a human being to it. When a human rejoices over it, delights in it, admires it, finds peace and contentment in it, that value seems to be magnified in people’s eyes.

When someone enjoys ice cream and raves over it with approving sounds, that ice cream seems good and valuable to others. When a man’s eyes light up when speaking about his car, and he praises it and talks about it and invites others to ride with him – his delight in his car magnifies its value to others. When someone finds satisfaction in a particular hobby, his or her delight in doing that hobby seems to say to others that it seems valuable to them.

When a person enjoys another person, their delight in that person speaks the highest praise about their value. The words of lovers ring with this kind of talk, “I love to be with you, I miss you, It makes me so happy to just hear your voice.’

Of course, you can enjoy something that is not valuable, but seemingly exalt its value. A gangster enjoys his criminal activity, and enjoys getting away with it. And to some, it seems his ways are to be admired, and followed. The seeming joy and freedom he has says to impressionable minds: ‘This is a good way to be.’

The heart of sin is to enjoy what displeases God. The reason we fall short of the glory of God is that when we sin, we value what God hates, and devalue what God loves. What you treasure reflects what kind of person you are. Dirty hearts treasure dirty things. Shallow hearts treasure shallow things. Haughty hearts treasure haughty things. Righteous hearts treasure righteous things. That’s why, the greatest enjoyment is to be that of God Himself.

Read the Psalms and listen to their enjoyment of God. The Psalms are people so contented in God, so enjoying God, that they are saying, “Isn’t He lovely? Isn’t He enjoyable? Isn’t He strong? Let’s enjoy Him together!”

Examples of ways to practice this every day include: adoring Him in prayer; being grateful for all things; being content with what He has given you; having peace in the midst of trials, delighting in His works, treasuring His Word, finding satisfaction in His promises; and rejoicing in His name in praise.

So the value of God is expressed by how much you seek after Him, by how much you enjoy Him, and thirdly, by what you will give up for Him.

### **3. You worship God by what you will give up for Him**

Here Jesus tells us that the man, after having found his treasure, and for the joy thereof, sells everything he has to buy that field in which the treasure lies. He gives up all his possessions, to gain that one possession. Or, in the case of the second man – he gives up all his other stocks, sells all he has, to buy this one pearl that exceed all others in value.

In both case, the sacrifice seems quite radical – they give up everything. But this is because in both cases, the men knew that due to the of what they are gaining, it was not a loss. If a field is worth R300 000, but hides a treasure worth R1 000 000, to sell your house and goods so as to be able to afford that R300 000 is not a loss. It is a gain.

The idea here is not that we give things up to lose. Rather, we give things up only when we believe what we are giving up is not as precious as what we are gaining. Something's value is seen in how much you will give up for it.

Think of what people give up to gain what they think it worthwhile. Sportsmen often give up years of social activity, pass up certain foods, refuse to just relax when they'd like to, because the prize of winning seems to them worth more than the loss. Some people are willing to risk their lives to climb a mountain, because they believe it is worth more to get to the top of a big rock than to go on living without doing so.

Or think of some people trying to make their business or enterprise a success. They sacrifice time, and money, and even relationships, because the goal seems to be worth more than the temporary losses. And think of what sacrifices we give up for the ones precious to us. What parents give up for their children, and people willing to even die for their families. As **John 15:13** says, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"

Of course, just because you give up a lot doesn't make it worthwhile. I remember watching an insert once on the man with the world's longest fingernails. He has given up the use of his arm so as to have that distinction. Great inconvenience, trouble sleeping – but to him it is worth the sacrifice for the gain of having grotesque, ugly fingernails. That's foolish. But everyone knows it seems valuable to him.

But when something truly is valuable, to give up anything for it is never loss but gain. This is why Paul could say things like this:

*But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

**Philippians 3:7-8**

*...Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**Philippians 1:20-21**

A woman came into the house where Jesus was and broke open a bottle of costly perfume and poured it on Jesus' head. The value of that perfume was about the value of one year's salary for the average worker. Imagine a perfume, worth 12 times an average salary, and then pouring out the whole bottle in one go on Jesus!

Some objected, thinking it a waste. But Jesus didn't. He commended her. Because what she had done was demonstrate costly, extravagant love. She valued Jesus more than money. She had through these actions shown, 'You are worth more than this perfume. Being pleasing to you, serving you, is greater gain to me, than having this perfume.'

This attitude of valuing God can be demonstrated when we face persecution; lose our reputation, friends or family for His Name's sake; lose money; give up advancement in the world; are misunderstood or falsely accused; are rejected; lose our possessions and lifestyles; accept a less affluent lifestyle; and when we endure sickness, loss, insults, deprivation, weaknesses, hardships, calamities with joy – because of what is set before.

In conclusion, what price do you put on God? Not with your lips – but with your life? What does your rejoicing say? What does your seeking say? What does your sacrifice say?

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to [display the value of God].*

**1 Corinthians 10:31**

So come to Christ as your Treasure – as the greatest find you will ever have – and be willing to give up all else for Him. Because what you treasure reflects where you will spend eternity.