

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of God. **2Timothy 2:15**

Trees Found, Forest Missing

Dan Henderson

Store In My Heart

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Anyone who sees and eats a bacon double cheeseburger will be filled, but anyone who does not see will go hungry.

I know it may seem silly, but take a moment to consider the two statements above. Are they difficult to read? Are they hard to comprehend? No. Yet there are many religious people who contend that all one has to do for salvation is believe. If that is true then, as long as you see your bacon cheeseburger before I eat it, you will be filled and I want to visit sonic with you for lunch. :-)

Silliness aside, 'and' is a conjunction. It joins two things together. Baptism is joined with believe for attaining salvation. Easy as ABC, unless you are trying to prove some theory from men.

"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 13:45-46

The verses above teach us a very important lesson regarding value. From them we learn that if we value something greatly we will be willing to give up all we have to attain it. We follow this principle during almost all of our life. We may not sell all we have but we are willing to do whatever is necessary to attain those things we value. Certainly this is as things ought to be. When we understand the value of Christ and His way we will leave all we have on earth to follow Him.

Unfortunately we sometimes have difficulty helping people understand the lesson taught in these verses and many others found in Scripture. In studying this passage we often strive to determine what is represented by each part of this parable. Let's look at what we find:

The merchant man must represent a seeker and mankind is seeking truth. Therefore the merchant man is any man that is looking to find value. The pearl of great price must certainly be Truth, for what could have more value than Truth? So we have a man looking for Truth who finds it and sacrifices everything to gain it. Certainly this fits what the Scripture teaches in these verses. We must be right.

But someone else says, "nothing is more valuable than a soul and the kingdom is likened to a merchant man." This means the merchant must be Christ, for he has the kingship. Jesus came to earth to "seek and to save that which was lost" which would be the souls of man. When he found man lost he willingly gave up who and what he was and purchased man. Now we have a perfect fit to the parable, so it must be right. We even have other scriptures to verify our conclusions.

Then another comes along and says, "the church is the kingdom and therefore the merchant man must be the church." The church is



looking for the lost and should use all its resources to save even just one soul.

Now we have a problem. Everyone cannot be right. The first two explanations are almost exactly opposite of one another, so one of them must be wrong. We must decide which is right and follow it, while excluding anyone holding a differing view. There can only be ONE truth, right?

Do you understand the title of this article now? Most all of us have heard of someone who "can't see the forest for the trees." I think we are guilty of that when studying God's word at times. We spend so much time trying to match the words in a parable that we miss the teaching of the story. The parables of Jesus were delivered to Israel, who had turned away from God. Many of them dealt with this problem specifically. Time after time the theme of a lesson pointed to Israel's need to return to God, or see the prophecy being fulfilled before their eyes. But we can use those parables today. The principles they teach still help us serve the Lord. When we study the epistles to the churches and individuals of the first century, we know that they are not written directly to us. We understand that even though we may not have one committing fornication with his father's wife, as in Corinth, the principles Paul teaches can be applied today. They apply to any sinner in the congregation that does not repent.

If the same is done with the parables we could avoid many disagreements and would be better equipped to serve the Lord. The principle is what we must understand as we study Scripture. Sometimes a full understanding of the principle will point us to only one conclusion regarding the individual elements of a parable. Other times it will allow us to apply a parable to many different areas of our service to the Lord.

So, what of our opening parable? Value is the lesson Jesus teaches. Much like we find in **Matthew 6** Jesus teaches the importance of recognizing value and being ready to sacrifice to attain that which is truly valuable. Much like he demonstrated with his leaving heaven to pay the price for our sins. Much like we are instructed to leave all and follow him.

For Our Information

Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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Paula Laubach will have a thoracic MRI on her spine Tuesday, and will see a neurosurgeon on Wednesday.

Gloria Hurst has an oncologist appointment Tuesday, to settle amount of radiation treatments she will need. She will also be taking some 'blocking' meds for several years at least.

Sue Soliday is getting around better, but she has not been feeling well the past week.

Ruben Keisler's back brace is helping with his pain.

Marla Rigsby is suffering with chills, sore throat & coughing.

Amy Simpson is having back problems this weekend.

Dan Henderson's throat scope went well.

Vickie McNees is dealing with more swelling in her foot.

Sunday Evening - **Esther 1**. Wednesday - **2Peter 1:5**.

Dan has login information for the building wifi network.



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!