

I will tell of Your name to
my brethren; In the midst
of the assembly I will praise
You. **Psalms 22:22**

Store In My Heart Proverbs 15:23

To make an apt answer is a joy
to a man, and a word in season,
how good it is!

This verse advises regarding
our interaction with others. We
need to be thoughtful of what
we are saying to those we meet
each day. It is rare that we know
what another individual has
been dealing with when we
cross paths. How and what we
speak to them can make a bad
day worse or a good day bad.
Even when we must give
answer to a specific question
we can do so with thought to
what is most appropriate for
encouragement. Giving extra
thought to our answer might
just make bad news bearable.

If we are thoughtful and
always try to speak kind words
and with an encouraging
attitude it is more likely that we
can add a moment of joy. It is
not always possible, but we
should try to lift the spirits of
those we meet. This is a Christ
like trait we should cultivate.

Trees Found, Forest Missing Dan Henderson

"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 for most 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 those who hold a differing view. There can only be ONE truth, right?

Do you understand the title of this article now? Most 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.

We need to remember that one principle may have many varied applications and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. No part is of any use without the whole. A key lesson for each of us to that we must be careful and diligent in our study of the Holy Scriptures. Keep focus on God's Word every day and it will guide you in all the ways of life and strait to Heaven. Understanding Scripture is key to living a strong, faithful life in service to God.

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak
with others about the Lord.

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For Our Information

Sue Soliday is seeing slow improvement in her lymphedema following a couple of shots and some physical therapy.

Vickie McNees has an arthritis Dr referral for her migraines.

Shannon Soliday will be in Indiana the next couple of weeks helping family with a house situation.

Travel becomes more frequent during the summer months. Keep travelers in your prayer in addition to those who are dealing with health problems

Sunday Evening – **Isaiah 14:3** Wednesday – **1John 2**

The
CHURCH OF CHRIST
MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study