



# SUNDAY READING

## SERMON.

A Great Bargain.  
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"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.

A merchant endeavors to trade so as to make a profit. Whether he deals in pearls or in grain, he does not hope to obtain riches by labor. He leaves that to those who earn their bread by the sweat of their face. He tries to get his by the sweat of his brain. He is dependent not so much upon labor as upon knowledge, upon skill, upon the advantage which superior acquaintance with the article which he deals in gives to him. Now, this merchantman is, at the very commencement, in some measure a picture of the seeker after Christ. Christ and His salvation are not to be earned; they are not to be procured as the result of labor. But Christ is to be had by knowledge. What saith the scripture? "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." That is, through their knowing Christ they become justified.

I shall not, however, enlarge upon this analogy, but proceed at once to speak of the merchant in this parable; for here we have a fit emblem of many who lay hold on Christ and find Him to be their all in all. Let us watch this merchant while he is doing four things: first, seeking; then, finding; then selling out; and, fourthly, buying again.

### I. Then, we shall watch him while He is Seeking.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls." It is different from the man we read of just now who, by accident, discovered a treasure while he was in the field. He was looking for something else, and came upon the treasure. That is the man whom God saves, though he was heretofore indifferent and careless. This is a person of a nobler sort. He is of a higher grade of mind—of altogether different mental constitution. He is seeking goodly pearls—something good, not exactly seeking the one pearl of great price, for at first he does not know about it; but, still, he is seeking pearls, and he comes upon one pearl in his seeking.

Now, notice about him, as a seeker, that he has his mind aroused and engaged. He is thinking about something—thinking about pearls. His heart is occupied with his business. His energies are thrown into it. All his thoughts are in the direction of precious stones. Oh that we could wake men up to exercise the faculty of thinking, and then to direct, to regulate, and control their thoughts! But thinking is an occupation that a great many persons altogether dislike. Oh that men were wise, that they were thoughtful!

### An Object in Life.

Equally evident is it that he had a fixed, definite object. He had given himself to pearl-hunting, and pearl-hunting was to be the one object of his life. If you had met him, and said, "What are you seeking?" he would have answered in a moment, "I am seeking good pearls: have you any to sell me?" He would have been sure to have the answer ready to hand. But ask many a man whom you meet with, "Sir, what are you living for?" he would, perhaps, tell you what his trade or what his profession might be; but if you pressed him with the question, "What is the main object of life?" he would not like to say that he was living only to enjoy himself—seeking his own pleasure.

### An Active Search.

The merchant was seeking goodly pearls. He did not open a shop, and say, "Pearls bought here if anybody likes to bring them;" but he went forth in quest of them. How far he travelled I do not know; but the Oriental trader frequently goes immense distances. You may meet at Nini-Novgorod, in the south of Russia, with traders who have been all round the globe seeking what they want—men who do not always travel by railway, but who will walk any distance to obtain the very article on which they have set their minds, and in which they deal. Distance seems with them to be no object. Ah, and when a man has got a noble object before him, and says, "Before I die, I will accomplish something that shall be right and true and beneficial to my fellow-men," he will face hardships that would baffle his fellows. I pray God that he may have the perseverance to carry that out, and that he may say, "If there is anything to be done that is good and true, I will do it at any hazard, for I am seeking goodly pearls."

### Moderate Expectations.

Evidently this merchant went into the business with comparatively moderate expectations. He was seeking pearls. If anybody had said, "Would you like to find a big pearl?" he would have said, "That I would, infinitely better than to find a number of little ones." He hardly hoped for it, and therefore he did not seek it; but, still, he was ready enough to have it if it came in this way. And so, my dear friends, I am speaking of a class of persons—and I hope there may be representatives of them here—who want everything they can get that is good and true. You want to be temperate in all things; you want to have an unsullied character. I recollect that was my own desire, when first I thought of the life that lay beyond me. Before I knew the Lord I used to think, "O that I might be kept from dishonesty, that I might be preserved from falsehood, that I might be kept from a malicious spirit, that I might be right-hearted and true." Those were the pearls that I wanted. I did not know just then that I could find something that would include all these minor pearls and a good deal more.

II. Let us go a stage farther, then, and look at this man's

### Finding.

He was buying pearls everywhere. He was hard after pearls; and so it came to pass that he lit upon a pearl that he never hoped to see. It was more than he expected. Ah, I pray God that some here, whose hearts are honestly seeking after that which is right, may find Christ, who has in him more of the spirit of temperance, uprightness, truth, philanthropy, than will be found anywhere else.

Certainly this man was in the way of finding a fine pearl if anybody was. He was seeking goodly pearls, not the one pearl; but he was in the pearl line, and so he was likely to discover the best pearl if anybody discovered it. "Being in the way, the Lord met with him," says one of old. Oh, if thou hast desires after that which is right and true and good, I trust that the Lord Jesus will manifest himself to you, and that you will say, "This is the very thing I sought. I have longed after it, and here it is."

So this man found all in one. What the value of that pearl was I do not know. The estimate of

### Its Value.

is not given. We only know that he thought it worth all that he had; and he went away and sold all that he had that he might buy it. And he evidently thought it worth all the other pearls he had ever been seeking for, because if he spent his all upon that one pearl it would be clear that he must have abandoned henceforth the searching after smaller pearls, since he had no capital left. Well, when a man finds Christ I cannot tell you how much he values Him, but this I know, that all the world besides seems nothing to a Christian when he has once found his Lord and Master. "Oh what a Christ have I!" saith he. But he cannot tell how dear—how inconceivably precious—the Christ of God is to his soul.

Concerning this find we must mark next that the man having found it, was resolved that he would have it. Having found the pearl of great price, he did not question whether he should buy it or not. If he had not gone out honestly to seek pearls he would have demurred at the price, but being intent upon pearl finding, he no sooner found this than he said, "I must have it. I can let the little pearls go if you like, but

### I Must Have That."

and it is grand when the Lord brings the mind to this. "I see that in Christ there is everything I want—pardon for my sin, cleansing for my nature, grace to maintain my character and to make me perfectly fit for heaven. There is all in Christ that I want, and I must have him. I must have him. It comes to this—at any price—whatever it may cost me, I must and I will have him."

Now, although the parable does not say it in so many words, it is perfectly clear that the person with whom he was dealing was willing to sell. When he had found one pearl of great price he bought it, which he could not have done if the other had not been ready to sell. Albeit the Lord in his mercy does not sell his grace, but gives it freely, the manner in which he disposes of it is here described under the figure of selling. If you want Christ, you must have him, if you are willing to come to the terms which God lays down. Of this I shall have to speak presently. If you desire this pearl of great price, there is no reason in the world why that pearl should not be yours to-night.

### III. Having thus described the seeker, we must go on to describe him

### Selling Out.

He sold out all that he had. It had taken him a long time to get it together, and I have no doubt he had much pleasure in the accumulation, but now he has great pleasure in selling. "Buy my farm," he says to one man. "Come buy it," "I don't know that I want to buy farms," says the other. "It is bought; it is bought." "Nevertheless, let us come to terms. I want money, and I must have money. And away went the furniture down in the house, one article after another. They must all go, clear them all out. Away they shall go at the best price they will fetch, but go they must, for he must have the pearl. Well now, Jesus Christ is to be had, but there is a great deal that a man must give up if he is ever to call Christ his own.

"What then," says one, "what am I to give up?" "Well, there must be a selling off tonight of a whole mass of old prejudices. Sometimes when the truth as it is in Jesus comes to a man's mind he repels it, because it is so different from what he has learnt ever since he was a child; and the notion is that you had better follow the religion of your parents. But it is a great mercy when a man says, 'Now, I understand that Jesus the Son of God has died in the room and place and stead of sinners that believe in him and I am simply to believe in him and I shall be saved. I will do it. It is contrary to what I have always been told. I have been led to think that it was my good works which would save me. I have heard that the grace was in the sacrament, but at length I perceive that God teaches in his word that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, and I will have it. I will sell my prejudices off. Away they shall go.'"

### What is Sold.

Next to that you must sell off your righteousness. It will not fetch much, but I daresay you think it is a fine thing. Hitherto you have been very good, and your own esteem of yourself is that as touching the commandments—"all these have I kept from my youth up." And what with a good deal of church-going, or attendance at the meeting house, and a few extra prayers on a Christmas-day and on Good Friday, and just a little dose of sacraments, you feel yourself in tolerably good case. Now, friend, that old moth-eaten righteousness of yours that you are so proud of you must sell off and get rid of it, for no man can be saved by the righteousness of Christ while he puts any trust in his own. Sell it all off, every rag of it.

Ay, and there are some men that will

have to give up a good deal of what they call pleasure, sinful pleasure. Come, can you sell all that off? That mixing in loose company, anything approaching to lewdness, anything that has to do with the gratification of the vile passions of the flesh—come, for Christ's sake, can you give it up? These things must be sold if we are to have the pearl.

### Popularity.

And, then, sometimes, in some cases men have to give up a good deal of the honors and the satisfaction of life that arise from the esteem of their fellow-creatures. Has it come to this, "If I become a Christian they will ridicule me." Well now, can you not put up with a little obloquy for Christ? "But if I am an earnest Christian then I shall have to encounter all sorts of slander." Very well, can you put up with the whole lot of it into the scale and say, "I sell it all off; let it all go, that I may have the pearl." "Well, you have taken enough surely." Yes, but this pearl hunter sold all that he had, and you have got a little left. You have got some prospects. If you become a Christian your old uncle will cut you out of his will. You know very well that if you shall go to hear the Gospel at such and such a place you are likely to be turned out of your situation. "But we must live," says somebody. This is not at all clear to my mind. I do know that we must die, but as to "must living," I do not feel quite so certain about it. Infinitely better to die than ever to do a dishonorable thing. If Jesus Christ be our Master, we must be content to let the fairest prospect go, and all things that seem to tell for our success in this life must be secondary in our account. The merchant sold all that he had.

I think I see you draw back. "This is too hard a line." Very well, if you do not want to buy the pearl, you see—that is to say, if you do not want to make your fortune—for that buying of the pearl was the making of the man's fortune—if you do not think the pearl is worth it, pray do not have it. God forbid you should refuse, but if you do not want him then say so.

### IV. Now, the last thing is

### The Buying.

He had sold all that he had, and then he pays the shekels over—pays them over that he may have the pearl, and he gets the pearl. It was a considerable purchase—a deliberate bargain. He did not see the pearl and then in a hurry go and sell his goods and guess at the value of it. No, but he had looked at it, for he was a seeker of pearls. And so he thought it over. It did not want much thinking over. Oh, if a soul did but know Christ, he would not think twice before he would have him. If men were not such fools—if they had but light from heaven to see the value of my Lord and Master, instead of our standing here and having to beg and persuade and find out new words of commendation, methinks they would only say, "Tell us about him. We will have him. What does he ask of use? What can we do for him?"

And it was an immediate purchase. He did not go home and say, "I shall think about this." No, but he knew that pearl, and he said,

### "If I Let that Slip

through my fingers I shall never see the like of it again. If anybody else gets that bargain, then I shall have lost the one opportunity of my life." And so he does but take time enough to go and sell his farm off, and the little land he had, and the little property he had. He was back quickly with his money. So, dear friends, he that cometh to Christ aright may well deliberate about it, but the end of his deliberation ought to be speedy. "If he is to be had, let me have him."

And, oh, what an enriching purchase it was which the man had made. So, brothers and sisters, if you have ever given up anything for Christ I am sure that the Lord Jesus Christ has made you very ample amends. Some years ago a person rather eccentrically advertised for persons who had been losers by obedience to the divine command—that if any one who had lost anything through love to Christ would add to him he would make it up. The odd advertisement appeared for some months in one of our religious periodicals. But the oddest thing is that nobody ever answered it. I should have thought that somebody would have tried and made out a case; but nobody did. They cannot make out such a case; they are

### No Losers by Christ.

"But," say some, "the martyrs were, were they not?" Well, they are up there, ask them. Oh, there is no losing when you deal with him.

This was a purchase he never regretted. He never wished to have it undone. With his pearl of immense worth he was a rich man, worthy to be the rival of princes, and he felt that it was enough. Oh, blessed are they who can say "It is enough," and can rejoice and bless and magnify the Lord. Let me, however, just put in one word of caveat. Take care, dear merchant brethren, that when you buy a pearl you buy a good one—that is the pearl of great price, because I have known noble spirits whom I have admired and felt ready to weep over; men that have been heroic in the pursuit of that which seemed to them perfectly true, and have made a sacrifice of all that they have for it, and yet

### They Have Been Deceived.

Mind that you get Christ and his truth as you find it revealed in Scripture, and revealed a second time in your own heart by the Holy Ghost, for whatever is short of Christ is a cheat and will deceive you. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." The voice of Jesus is heard in this parable of the kingdom describing and directing the seekers. Such persons comprise no small fraction of an assembly like the present one. I am sure of some of you have seen the pearl you want sparkling before your eyes. I wonder how many of you have resolved to sell all you have to buy it. But who among you all have actually made the pearl your own, and rejoice in

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