

# Securing the Pearl of Righteousness

“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).

“We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 117.

**Suggested Reading:** *Steps to Christ*, pp. 85–91.

# 1. The Pearl Of Great Price

- a. How are we to understand the Pearl of great price? Matthew 13:45, 46.
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“Christ Himself is the pearl of great price. . . . The righteousness of Christ, as a pure, white pearl, has no defect, no stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without a flaw.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 115.

- a. **Matthew 13:45-46** (45) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: (46) Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

# 1. The Pearl Of Great Price

- b. How does one obtain the Pearl of great price? Isaiah 55:1–3. What must be surrendered to get it? Zechariah 3:4; Ephesians 4:22–32.
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“Salvation is a free gift, and yet it is to be bought and sold. . . . The poorest are as well able as the richest to purchase salvation; for no amount of worldly wealth can secure it. It is obtained by willing obedience, by giving ourselves to Christ as His own purchased possession.”—*Ibid.*, p. 117.

“O that you would search the Scriptures with prayerful hearts, and a spirit of surrender to God! O that you would search your hearts as with a lighted candle, and discover and break the finest thread that binds you to worldly habits, which divert the mind from God!”—*Maranatha*, p. 48.

**b. Isaiah 55:1-3** (1) Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (2) Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. (3) Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

**Zechariah 3:4** (4) And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

**Ephesians 4:22-32** (22) That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

(24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (25) Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. (26) Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (27) Neither give place to the devil. (28) Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. (29) Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (30) And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

## 2. The Process of buying Christ's Righteousness

- a. What does “buying” righteousness really mean? How is Christ's righteousness “bought”? Revelation 3:18.
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“The Saviour comes with jewels of truth of the richest value in distinction from all counterfeits, all that is spurious. He comes to every house, to every door; He is knocking, presenting His priceless treasure, urging, ‘Buy of me.’ ”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 964.

“In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord's, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 116.

- a. **Revelation 3:18** (18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

## 2. The Process of buying Christ's Righteousness

- b. Why do we need to buy of Christ wholeheartedly? Jeremiah 29:11–13.
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“Jesus is going from door to door, standing in front of every soul temple, proclaiming, ‘I stand at the door, and knock’ (Revelation 3:20). As a heavenly merchantman, He opens His treasures. . . . ‘Open your doors,’ says the great Merchantman, the possessor of spiritual riches, ‘and transact your business with Me. It is I, your Redeemer, who counsels you to buy of Me.’”—*The Review and Herald*, August 7, 1894.

“To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

- b. **Jeremiah 29:11-13** (11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (12) Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. (13) And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

### 3. Paying for the Precious Pearl

- a. What do we all—rich, poor, those who have grown up in the church, and those who have grown up among worldly-minded persons—need to realize in seeking to pay for the Pearl of great price? Proverbs 22:2; Acts 10:34, 35.
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“Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation. God calls for your willing obedience. He asks you to give up your sins. . . .

“There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 117, 118.

a. **Proverbs 22:2** (2) The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

**Acts 10:34-35** (34) Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

### 3. Paying for the Precious Pearl

b. What could cause us to miss this sale? Luke 9:24; 14:33; James 4:10.

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“How many, if now called to render up their accounts, would do it with grief, regret, and remorse that their God-given probationary time was so fully employed in self-serving! The eternal interests of the soul have been fearfully neglected for unimportant affairs. The mind is kept busy, just as Satan designs it shall be, with selfish interests and nothing of any consequence, and time may be passing into eternity without a fitting up for heaven at all.

“What can be compared with the loss of a human soul? It is a question which every soul must determine for himself—whether to gain the treasures of eternal life or to lose all because of his neglect to make God and His righteousness his first and only business. Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, . . . looks with grief upon the large number of those who profess to be Christians who are not serving Him but themselves.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 321.

b. **Luke 9:24** (24) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

**Luke 14:33** (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

**James 4:10** (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

## 4. Appreciating the Value of the Pearl

- a. Why would anyone sell all to buy the Pearl of great price? What makes it such a profitable business transaction? Job 28:12-23; Proverbs 2:1-5.
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“The Gospel of Christ is a blessing which all may possess. It takes men as they are, poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked. The only condition Christ presents to those who come to Him to be clothed with His righteousness is obedience to His commandments. And by the obedient soul the law is found to be a law of perfect liberty, liberty to lay hold by faith on the hope that is sure and steadfast. When we render back to God His own, when we wash our robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, then we shall be entitled to a celestial crown.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 15, 1898.

“What do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! I am ashamed to hear it spoken of, ashamed to write it.

“God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 46.

a. **Job 28:12-23** (12) But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? (13) Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. (14) The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. (15) It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. (16) It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. (17) The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. (18) No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. (19) The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. (20) Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? (21) Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. (22) Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. (23) God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

**Proverbs 2:1-5** (1) My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; (2) So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; (3) Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; (4) If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; (5) Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

## 4. Appreciating the Value of the Pearl

- b. What motivates the buyer to “sell” in order to “buy”? How does duty become “a delight and sacrifice a pleasure”? Numbers 21:8, 9; Matthew 13:44.
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“A view of our sinfulness drives us to [our Saviour] who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.”—*Ibid.*, p. 65.

“When once the gaze is fixed upon [Jesus], the life finds its center. The enthusiasm, the generous devotion, the passionate ardor, of the youth find here their true object. Duty becomes a delight and sacrifice a pleasure. To honor Christ, to become like Him, to work for Him, is the life’s highest ambition and its greatest joy.”—*Education*, p. 297.

**b. Numbers 21:8-9** (8) And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. (9) And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

**Matthew 13:44b**(44) 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.

## 5. Discerning Value

- a. What happens when we discern the value of the Pearl? Acts 2:37.
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“As the apostles set forth the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, three thousand souls were convicted. They were made to see themselves as they were, sinful and polluted, and Christ as their friend and Redeemer. Christ was lifted up, Christ was glorified, through the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon men. By faith these believers saw Him as the One who had borne humiliation, suffering, and death that they might not perish but have everlasting life.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 120.

- a. **Acts 2:37** (37) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

## 5. Discerning Value

- b. What happens when we understand the cost and value of the Pearl—so much so that we decide to buy it? Isaiah 55:7; Philippians 3:7, 8.
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“If we have forsaken all for Christ, our lives will be humble, our conversation heavenly, our conduct blameless. The powerful, purifying influence of truth in the soul, and the character of Christ exemplified in the life, are a confession of Him. Integrity, firmness, and perseverance are qualities that all should seek earnestly to cultivate; for they clothe the possessor with a power which is irresistible—a power which makes him strong to do good, strong to resist evil, strong to bear adversity. . . . Those who have placed themselves without reserve on the side of Christ will stand firmly by that which reason and conscience tell them is right.”—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 277.

**b. Isaiah 55:7 (7)** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

**Philippians 3:7-8 (7)** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (8) Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is the Pearl of great price?
2. What process is involved in the purchase of the Pearl?
3. What is the biblical purchasing method? Explain.
4. Why would a person sell all for one pearl?
5. What happens inside us when we truly appreciate the value of the Pearl?