

***“Jesus said: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.... Have you understood all these things?’ (His disciples) said to Him, ‘Yes.’”***

What about you? Have you understood these things? The people of the world do not understand whatsoever how precious Jesus is. They do not see Him as the greatest treasure of all. They do not hold Him up as the one pearl having greater value than anything else in their life. The people of the world do not have this understanding. And it shows by how they live. Jesus is just not that important to them. He is not a pearl worth seeking. He is not a treasure worth giving up everything else to acquire.

But we should know this: Jesus’ question is not for them. He does not ask, *“Have you understood all these things?”* of those who are of the world. He puts this question to His disciples, to those who call Him Lord and Savior.

And this is you, is it not? And so, Jesus asks this question of you. *“Have you understood all these things?”* What is your answer? If you say Yes as His disciples did, are you prepared to defend your response? What I mean is, does the way you live support your answer? If you understand Jesus to be the greatest treasure of all, does your daily life reflect this? If you understand Jesus to be the one pearl worth seeking, above everything else in your life, is this what you are doing – seeking Him above all else?

I don’t know your daily Bible reading schedule and your daily prayer life, but Jesus does. I don’t know what percentage of your income you give to Jesus, but He knows. I do know how many Sunday mornings you spend here in His house and at His table, but only He knows if you take His words of life home with you and truly meditate on them through the week.

Hmmm, maybe you and I would be more honest with our answer were we to say, “No. No Jesus, I do not understand all these things. Because if I did, I would place a much higher importance upon You, upon Your words and sacraments for me, upon your church and your gifts here for me, upon the way in which I am called upon to support Your work, both here, and in other mission fields in the world. But since I do not live out my daily life as though You are the most precious treasure, and the one pearl of great value, obviously my answer, if I am being honest, is No. No Jesus, I do not understand all these things. I do not even really understand who You are to me.”

Let’s not be hypocrites. Let’s not say one thing with our mouth, but the opposite with our day-to-day life. Instead, let’s repent of our half-hearted attempt in being Jesus’ disciples. If we want to live like the world, then let’s at least be honest about it as we continue to live as if Jesus is not all that important. But if we really do want to be His disciples, let’s have the courage to say, “Jesus, I do not understand all these things, for the way I live shows that I do not.”

Jesus, however, does understand all these things. Jesus understands that you, yes you, are, to Him, the greatest treasure of all. Jesus understands that you are the one pearl worth seeking and worth having. And even though it cost Him everything, even His own life upon the wretched cross, He had pure joy in giving everything up to purchase you for Himself.

Jesus does not say one thing with His mouth but the opposite with how He lived, suffered, and died. His “Yes” to you He backed up with His “Yes” to the cross. He sees you as the greatest treasure, not because you are such a standup person, so blameless and holy in how you behave. Not at all! He calls you the greatest treasure because He finds you buried in a field of mud. Let’s call it what it is. A field of sin – lust, greed, selfishness, and dishonesty. Jesus does not reject you for this. He has joy over you, and He spills His precious blood for you to forgive you and to have you for Himself.

He seeks you, not because you seek Him, but because you seek all the wrong things in life. He sees you as the most priceless pearl, not because you live each day for Him, but because you do not. And yet, He rescues you from your slimy way of life, and He forgives you, and He gives up everything to have you.

If you are not seeking Jesus above everything else in your life, and counting Him as the greatest treasure of all, it’s because you are not seeing yourself the way Jesus sees you. He is the man who found the hidden treasure, and that treasure is you. He is the merchant seeking fine pearls, and that one pearl of great value is you. Jesus is the one who gives up everything for you, to purchase you, to have you, and to hold you dear to Himself.

My dear fellow sinners, He forgives you. He truly does. Is this not sufficient reason to see Him as your greatest treasure? To seek Him and His kingdom first throughout your life?

When you fail in this, He does not throw you away. You are now, and you always will be, His hidden treasure, and His pearl of great value. Believe this, and your life will reflect it. Amen.