

The Parables of Jesus  
Parables of Pearls and Wineskins  
Matthew 13 & Luke 5  
Thursday Morning Bible Study  
Our Redeemer, Wauwatosa

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- Parables are meant to be shocking – to push you to be either passionately for Jesus or against him.
- For us, there is little that is shocking about this parable.
- “The Kingdom of Heaven (God) is like a man, a merchant seeking excellent pearls. When he found he found one of great value, went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- One interpretation: The pearl is the Gospel message, the good news of the Kingdom of God. The merchant will do all he can to get this one message. The disciple is willing to let go of material gain because the kingdom is more valuable and thus worth giving up everything.
- Lutheran – The man searching for pearls is Jesus, and we are the pearl of great price. When Jesus finds you, he gives up everything, even himself, to have you. We were purchased at great price.

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- Jesus' use of "appositive" -- A noun or noun phrase that renames or reshapes another noun right beside it. The appositive here is that the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a merchant.
- The "man" – a human being. He is paired with
- A Merchant – "*emporos*" – A man who markets things that people do not need for prices they cannot afford.

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- In our culture, "merchant" is not a negative. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, this is an abhorrent occupation, like a drug dealer.
- Only one other place in the NT where *emporos* is used is in Rev. 18, referring to merchants of the earth who have become rich but no longer have anyone to buy their stuff.
- In the Septuagint - The *emporos* are the ones who sold Joseph into slavery. They are synonymous with transgressors.

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- Jesus is pushing the idea that sinners, even merchants, have a place in the Kingdom of God.
- Pearls had the topmost rank of all things of great price. To the Jew they were unclean. Jesus is hinting that the Kingdom includes not only merchants, but also gentiles!
- In Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom, everyone counts.

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- The merchant is “seeking” – He knows he needs something and actively seeks it out.
- He sells everything he has. He is passionate.
- The merchant not only gains the pearl, it changes who he is. He is no longer a merchant. He is first and foremost a human being. He redefines himself.
- Can we accept even “merchants” as members of our community?

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- We have a man in the wrong profession, seeking the wrong things – non-kosher pearls. He spends all he has on a pearl, and once he has it, he is no longer a merchant.
- Jesus is challenging us – what are we seeking? People are always seeking the next great thing, and once they have it they are not satisfied.
- The pearl cancels all other desires. The merchant found that one thing, and no longer looks anymore.

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price –  
Matthew 13:45-46

- Can we, like the merchant be willing to go all in? Can we be fully passionate?
- That is the challenge Jesus is putting before us. What do I value most? Am I willing to set aside everything to get it?
- If you knew the end was coming tomorrow morning, what would you do differently this evening?
- Once we know that the only treasure that counts is the Kingdom, are we ready to strip away all to have it? Are we all in, or are you out?

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- V. 39 can be problematic. It would seem that the new is better than the old, except this verse says the opposite.
- What this parable is NOT about – a common interpretation that is both anachronistic and anti-semitic: the idea that the new garment represents things like the Gospel, grace, the Church, the new covenant, while the old garment is the old Covenant. Thus the Gospel cannot be put into the Old Covenant. A wrong idea.

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- Jesus is not teaching that the church is a new, separate movement. At the time Jesus taught this, there was no new church, nor is there a New Testament.
- In fact, v. 39 says that old wine is better than the new!
- We need to think like 1<sup>st</sup> century Hebraic thinkers? What did a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew living in Galilee hear?

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- The context: The parable lies in the middle of Jesus' selection of his disciples. In Luke 5 Jesus selects fisherman, and even a tax collector. In Luke 6 he chooses the last of his disciples. He is criticized for the type of people he is choosing as his disciples.
- Jesus wants to answer why he chose the ones he chose.

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- In the teachings of the Fathers, the vessels containing the wine are individual disciples and teachers. So, too, the new cloth. A new garment would be an untrained student.
- All Jewish boys: By age 3, learn letters of the alphabet. By age 5, begin their study of the Torah. By age 10, recite Genesis to Deuteronomy by heart. By 15, some would be chosen by a Rabbi. By 18 some of those chosen to be a disciple, who would follow their rabbi until age 30.

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- So Peter, James, John, etc. were men who did not make the final cut, so they pursued the business of their father.
- To those from Jerusalem, they would be considered “uneducated.”
- The “old garment” were those who were “educated”. A new patch was a new teaching. Such new teaching would be rejected by students of another rabbi.

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- The old wineskins – previously educated students. The new wine was a new teaching from a new rabbi. It would be rejected.
- A new teaching from a new rabbi requires new, uneducated students.
- Jesus is choosing people who were blank slates. They were ready to be taught.

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Double Parable of New Cloth and New Wine

Luke 5:36-39

- The parable's meaning: No one takes new teachings and tries to teach them to already educated students. Instead, new teachings are to be taught to new students.
- Jesus is, in effect, saying that he would not choose the Pharisees around him. They are not qualified because they would reject His new teachings.
- Today: Whom do we choose to associate with? Where does Jesus find the most willing, receptive audience?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---