

THE KINGDOM'S WORTH: PRICELESS
Matthew 13:44-46
ABC 5/3/20

We all love treasure stories. The proof is seen in the number of ones there are on TV. To name just a few: *Civil War Gold*, *Lost Gold of WW2*, & my addiction, *Curse of Oak Island*. & on satellite radio there's a show called *Buried Treasure*. In my research this week I ran across a local treasure that was found & has become part of case law in the States.

In 1894, southeast of Phoenix, Dee & Mary Roberts hired 2 boys to shovel out an old chicken coop. During the job, the boys found a tin can buried beneath the hen house. Lugging it out, they realized it was very heavy. They guessed it might be filled with rocks, but the lid had rusted shut. With a handy axe, they popped the lid off & found there was something much more significant than rocks inside. It was filled with \$5, \$10, & \$20 gold coins. But the fight over who got to keep the coins led to a legal precedent that's still cited to this day.

Chalmus Danielson, the younger brother, 8, wanted to take the gold home. His brother Waldo, 10, insisted they show the coins to the landowner. When Mary Roberts found out about it, she demanded the boys give her the can. After they did, the couple went back into the house & closed the door without an explanation. The boys went back to work. About 30 minutes later, Mr Roberts called to the boys & gave them each a nickel & told them he'd stashed the gold there years ago & not to tell anyone about it. 9 years went by & the boys grew into men. They never forgot about their discovery & the greedy way the Roberts had behaved. The brothers took them to court.

At 1st in district court they didn't have much luck. Judge Hanna of Jacksonville refused to let a jury hear it. He claimed the coin hoard *had been intentionally deposited by someone*, & Oregon law didn't entitle the boys to the property.

The Danielsons' lawyers didn't give up & appealed all the way to Oregon's Supreme Court. In 1904, the Danielson brothers finally got some good news. Based on the testimony that the can was decrepit & buried in undisturbed, hardened ground, & that the old hen house had gone through many owners in the 40 years since it was built, the court ruled that judge Hanna must allow the case to go to trial.

The dispute over who had legal rights to the gold coins eventually went to trial, but the jury was split, 9 to 3 in favor of the boys. Wanting to avoid another trial, the Roberts settled with the Danielson brothers out of court for \$6,000. The Oregon Supreme Court case, *Danielson v Roberts*, [44 OR 10S, 74 Pac. 913, 914 (1904)], is still referred to today in cases related to treasure hunting. Lawyers argue if the property owners don't know an item is there, it doesn't belong to them.

After dividing the proceeds of the settlement, Waldo & Chalmus, by this time 21 & 19, went their separate ways. Waldo married & used his share to buy a part-ownership in a foundry in Medford. On Nov 23, 1905, when he was just 22, he was sitting on a wheelbarrow by the front door of the foundry after finishing his day's work when a pile of bricks fell on him, knocking him unconscious. He never recovered & died 2 days later.

What happened to Chalmus's share is unknown. He remained in the Medford area until about 1914 & eventually moved to Sacramento, California, where he worked as a mechanic. He died there on May 15, 1970.¹

¹ <https://katu.com/sponsored/sell-gold/if-you-find-buried-treasure-do-you-get-to-keep-it> & <https://www.topic.com/who-owns-buried-treasure>

Why am I talking about treasure? Because that's what Jesus talks about in our 2 parables today in Mt 13. In the 1st 4 parables, we've seen Jesus focus on man's responses to God's kingdom, its coexistence with Satan's kingdom, & its power & influence in the world. A natural question that would have naturally occurred to the disciples was, *How do I become a part of this kingdom? Are we, as Jews, automatically citizens of the kingdom or do we have to do something else?* In this pair of parables Jesus teaches about salvation & becoming a citizen of God's kingdom. True disciples are those who recognize that God's kingdom is so valuable that it's worth sacrificing whatever it takes to be its citizen. With these 2 parables, Jesus covers the whole range of humanity, from those who aren't looking for Jesus or salvation to those who seek it in a variety of ways. **44**

1. HIDDEN TREASURE Jesus builds this story around a familiar situation. The practice of hiding valuables in the ground was common in times of warfare & when banks weren't available.² When they needed money or their valuables, they'd go to the place, uncover their stash, take out what was needed, & re-bury the rest. When the owner of buried treasure died or was driven from the land, the treasure was lost until someone found it. No doubt that was the fate of the **treasure hidden in the field, which a man found & hid again**. He may have stumbled over it or saw it sticking out as he happened to pass by. Or maybe he'd been hired by the land owner & found it while working. Whatever the case, the **field** didn't belong to him, because, **from joy over it he goes & sells all that he has, & buys that field**. Many are confused by this, thinking Jesus used a dishonest act to illustrate a spiritual truth. In our thinking, it seems that the man should have told the owner of the **field** about the **treasure**, since it was on his property. But the point of the parable doesn't involve the ethics of what the **man** did, but rather his willingness to sacrifice everything he had in order to own the **treasure**. But what he did wasn't unethical or dishonest. It's clear the treasure wasn't hidden by the owner & was unknown to him. Otherwise, he would've dug it up before he sold the field. The **man** who bought the field knew the owner wasn't aware of the **treasure** or he wouldn't have offered to buy the field knowing the treasure wouldn't be included in the deal. Also,

² Leon Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, p 359; Josephus, *Jewish War*, 7.5.2

rabbinic law provided that *if one finds scattered ... money ... it belongs to the finder*.³ If a person came across money or other valuables that had been lost & whose owner was unknown, the finder could keep it. Finally, the basic honesty of the **man** is testified to by the fact that, had he been dishonest, he'd simply have taken the **treasure** without any thought of buying the field. But he didn't even use part of the **treasure** to buy the field; rather, he **sells all that he has, & buys that field**. That's the 1st of these twin parables. The 2nd is similar. **45-46**

2. PEARL OF GREAT VALUE A **merchant** was a wholesale dealer whose business was to buy & resell merchandise. Kind of like *American Pickers* with antiques & collectibles, looking for things to buy & sell for a profit. This **merchant** spent his time **seeking fine pearls**. He probably went to various places where pearls were harvested & bargained with the divers or their employers over prices. The danger of diving for pearls, in addition to their scarcity & natural beauty, made them extremely precious. They were highly valued in the ancient world.

Among the most colorful tales in the pearl world is that of a banquet, where Cleopatra bet Marc Antony that she could host the most expensive dinner in history. According to author & pearl expert Fred Ward, in his book, *Pearls*, she hoped to impress Antony & the Roman Empire he represented with the extent of Egypt's wealth. In her attempt to do so, she crushed a large pearl from a pair of earrings & dissolved it in a goblet of wine, before drinking it.

Pliny the Elder, in his book, *Natural History*, tells of 2 of Cleopatra's pearls, which are estimated to be worth \$28.5 million in today's dollars.⁴

When the **merchant** came across **one pearl of great value, he went & sold all he had, & bought it**. Obviously, he considered that pearl to have been worth more than all his other pearls, because they'd have been included in the sale of **all that he had**. 2 short similes, twin parables, but what's meant by them? The emphasis is one of salvation. In this context, **the kingdom of heaven**, which is synonymous with the *kingdom of God*, represents the saving knowledge of God through faith in His Son & all the benefits that relationship brings. These 2 men stand for anyone who becomes a citizen of the kingdom, a follower of Jesus. The point is simply that the kingdom of God is so valuable that it's worth sacrificing everything to get it. It's worth the ultimate sacrifice whether one's a spiritual seeker or an apathetic, hostile person, or anything in between. As Jesus said, **what**

³ Ronald H. Isaacs, *Bubbe Meises: Jewish Myths, Jewish Realities*, p 49

⁴ Victoria Gomelsky, *7 Things You Didn't Know About Pearls*, JCK Magazine, & Peter Tomory's, *Cleopatra, Pearls & Extravagance: Tiepolo's Banquet of Cleopatra*. Quoted at <https://www.grantsjewelry.com/the-real-story-about-cleopatras-banquet-and-that-pearl/>

will it profit a man if he gains the whole world & forfeits his soul? (Mt 16:26). Gaining the **whole world** at the expense of one's soul isn't worth it. If we live to have the things of this world, we'll end up losing everything. But if we surrender everything to Jesus, we'll gain everything.

3. LESSONS FROM THE PARABLES The hardest task here isn't understanding what Jesus means, but applying it personally. As Richard Baxter said, *These plain words need more belief & consideration than they do exposition.*⁵ The meaning is simply that there's a treasure, a pearl, so valuable that it's worth sacrificing everything to get it. It's so beyond value that it's worth giving up anything to obtain it. & when you find this treasure it doesn't just change a part of you, it changes everything. From these 2 parables we find at least 6 lessons about **the kingdom** & about salvation.⁶

A. THE KINGDOM IS PRICELESS The parables express the value of salvation because it's worth selling all one has in order to receive it. Earthly treasures don't offer anything truly worthwhile or lasting. They can't forgive a sinful heart nor bring us to God. The blessing of being a child of God through faith in Jesus is priceless, more valuable than all the wealth of the richest man. There's nothing to compare to it because it's **an inheritance which is imperishable & undefiled & will not fade away** (1 Pt 1:4). It's forgiveness, love, peace, joy, righteousness, eternal life, glory, & much, much, more.

When Robert Thompson, who owned a bunch of newspapers & controlled many other companies, & was personally worth more than \$300 million, was asked how much he'd give to buy the *New York Times* newspaper, he's said to have replied, *I'd mortgage my soul.*⁷

If they could, many people would do just that in order to achieve the possessions, popularity, or power for which they long. But the value of God's kingdom far exceeds all earthly riches. Yet God offers to give His kingdom to any & every person who trusts in Christ. The price is the same for everyone: all they have. For those whose hearts are genuinely turned to Christ, whatever values they've clung to in the past will be gladly exchanged for this priceless treasure. The point of selling everything in these parables is simply to show where your heart is. Where your treasure lies reveals where your heart is (Mt 6:21). & if your heart is to have the kingdom above all things, then Lk 12:32 comes true for you: **It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

⁵ Quoted at http://www.brownklan.com/donfortner_com/bible_class_lessons/matthew/

⁶ John MacArthur, *Matthew*, vol 2 p 384ff

⁷ <http://lightebc.com/2017/09/perspectives-change-your-outcomes-mark-836-37/>

B. THE KINGDOM MUST BE PERSONALLY RECEIVED We're not saved in groups. Both parables center around a single individual who gives all he has in order to get what's become infinitely valuable to him. A person may attend church, enjoy the fellowship & preaching, & be a baptized member of a church, but that doesn't make him a citizen of God's kingdom. Such superficial & false **sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping & gnashing of teeth** (Mt 8:12). In the same way, a person can be born into a Christian family & still have no part in Christ's kingdom. To be saved, each person has to make his own decision to receive Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior. The treasure, the pearl, must be appropriated by each person individually.

C. THE KINGDOM ISN'T PHYSICALLY VISIBLE When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered ... & said, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" (Lk 17:20-21). The kingdom won't be visible until Jesus returns & establishes His physical reign over the earth. At that time He's going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, & men will see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Mt 16:27-28). But the present kingdom is not of this world (Jn 18:36). As Paul tells us, **A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, & he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised** (1 Cor 2:14). In his next letter to them he explains that **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ** (2 Cor 4:4). Even when the truth of the gospel is clearly presented, when the treasure is visible, the natural man can't see it. As long as he resists God's Spirit, he's blinded by Satan & content to continue seeking his passing pleasures & the things which can't satisfy. The value of salvation isn't naturally obvious & it's not something men naturally seek. The value of a pearl may not be evident to the average person. I can't tell a pearl from a bead. I may admire its beauty & yet be totally unaware of its priceless value. Many have a passing admiration for Jesus & the gospel but are totally unaware of the supreme & priceless gift that could be theirs. They see the pearl in plain view but, to their worldly eyes, it has little worth. How does John put it? **Jesus was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, & the world was made through Him, & the world did not know Him.** He

came to His own, & those who were His own did not receive Him (Jn 1:9-11). God's kingdom is priceless, is received individually, isn't visible, but ...

D. THE KINGDOM IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE JOY It was from **joy** that the man sold all he had in order to buy the field that held the treasure. **Joy** is a desire we all have & it's the desire that all others either directly or indirectly serve. We like to eat because food brings joy & satisfaction to our mouths & bellies. The desire for money is based in the joy we hope to find in the things it can buy. Fame, power, knowledge, & all the other things we long for are desired for the joy it's hoped they'll bring. Yet all are temporary & disappointing. The only true joy is the joy found in Jesus & His kingdom, because we were made by God & for God. After Jesus told His disciples to abide in Him, to have His words abide in them, & to keep His commandments, He said, **These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, & that your joy may be made full** (Jn 15:1-11). A little while later He said, **Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, & you will receive, that your joy may be made full** (16:24). John says, **These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete** (1 Jn 1:4). Paul tells us that the **kingdom of God is...peace & joy in the Holy Spirit** (Rom 14:17); & in the benediction of Romans he prays, **Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy & peace... that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit** (15:13). True joy comes in the discovery & appropriation of Christ & His kingdom through trust in Him.

E. THE KINGDOM IS ENTERED FROM DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES Each individual can come into God's kingdom from different circumstances. There's no precondition for turning from sin & turning to Christ in faith. You don't have to become anything else before you become a Christian & you can come from wherever you are. These 2 parables are similar in that the main character in each is a man who discovers something of extreme value & gives all he owns to buy it. But the ways in which they come across their treasures are very different. The man who finds the treasure is by accident. The pearl merchant was looking for the very thing he eventually found & bought. In the course of going about his normal business, the 1st man was working in or passing through a field. Finding a treasure was probably the last thing on his mind. Likewise, many people come across the gospel while going about the normal activities of their daily life, with no expectation or concern

for salvation or anything spiritual. While earning a living, caring for a family, getting an education, or building a career, they read a book, hear a sermon, or have a conversation that presents the claims & promises of Jesus. By the Spirit's power, they instantly recognize the priceless value of the gospel & they believe & are saved & inherit the kingdom. That's what happened to Paul. Trusting Christ as Lord & Savior was the last thing on his mind that day on the road to Damascus. In the nearly 2,000 years since then, millions of others have been convicted & converted by the power of God while in the midst of a life of denying & opposing Him. The woman at the well had come there simply to draw water & go on about her day, but she came across the Source of living water, went home redeemed (Jn 4:5-42).

Charles Spurgeon grew up in a Christian home, but as a boy he attended church only because it was the right thing to do. He wasn't immoral or rebellious but was satisfied with his life & wasn't wanting any more religion than he had. One New Year's morning, when he was 15, he decided to attend the service at his church. But the snow & wind became too fierce for him.

*When I could go no further, he writes, I turned down a court & came to a little Primitive Methodist church. The preacher who was to have conducted the service never got there because he was held up by the weather, & quickly one of the officers had to be brought forward to conduct the service with the congregation of perhaps 15 people. The man was really stupid. His text was, **Look unto Me & be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.** & he just kept repeating it because he had nothing else to say. But something about Spurgeon caught the man's eye, & he said, *Young man, you look very miserable. & miserable in life & miserable in death you will be if you don't obey my text.* He then shouted, *Young man, look to Jesus! Look, look, look!**

*I looked, said Spurgeon, & then & there the cloud was gone & the darkness rolled away & that moment I saw the Son.*⁸

Like Paul, the woman at the well, & multitudes more, Spurgeon was looking for nothing but found everything. The 2nd parable, on the other hand, portrays a man whose life business was searching for the thing he finally found. He represents the seeker who for years looks everywhere for meaning & purpose in life, trying one religion or philosophy after another. He finds nothing that satisfies but believes the truth is out there if he can only find it & he never stops looking. That was the experience of the Ethiopian eunuch the Holy Spirit led Philip to meet on the Gaza road. After all his seeking & study, he was still confused & unsatisfied. But when Philip explained that Isaiah was writing about Jesus the Savior, he immediately believed (Acts 8:26-39). Cornelius, was much the

⁸ Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography*

same. God honored his sincere seeking by sending Peter to explain the gospel & lead him & his household to salvation (Acts 10). They were looking for spiritual pearls & found the One that was priceless beyond their greatest hopes. That contrast shows the past experiences of people who find salvation. Some weren't eager to find Christ & weren't even interested in religion. They were going on their way when suddenly the good news of Jesus confronted them. They weren't seeking it but there it was. At once, with insight granted by God's internal work of regeneration, they saw this was a prize of far greater value than anything that had ever come into their lives before. They saw themselves as sinners in need of a Savior. They saw Jesus as that Savior. They recognized that if they had Him, they had everything. So they turned to Him & believed. Their case illustrates Isaiah's words, **I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me** (65:1, NIV). The other type of person is one who'd sought God, though he'd found it difficult. This person didn't know during those years of seeking that God was seeking him as well. Those were dark, despairing times. But suddenly the pearl of great price was before him & he laid everything else aside to gain that most valued object.

Jesus is calling both the person who's searching for spiritual truth as well as the person who's entirely apathetic toward God to give up whatever stands between them & His kingdom. As with the man in the field, some stumble upon Jesus when they aren't looking for Him. Others travel various spiritual paths for years before finding Him who is **the way, the truth, & the life** (Jn 14:6), just as the merchant searched tirelessly for the costliest pearl. God's grace calls the spiritually apathetic as well as those who believe themselves to be seeking Him. In both cases, it's God who sovereignly ordains their discovery of Jesus. He deals with all people as individuals, ordering the steps of each one in accord with His plan, graciously granting to sinful hearts the will & the wisdom to see & appreciate the infinite value of the kingdom & brings them to value Christ greater than all the riches of the world. That is saving faith. Jesus may allow us to search for Him or He may come looking for us, but all we can do once we find Him is simply rejoice at the great treasure He's allowed us to find.

F. SAVING FAITH HAS A HIGH COST In both parables the priceless object was bought at the expense of

everything the finder owned. For that reason, some are uncomfortable with these parables, because they seem to say salvation is bought. But throughout the Bible it's clear that salvation is totally the free gift of God (Eph 2:8-10). God the Father is pleased to give us His kingdom (Lk 12:32). Jesus is saying the selling of all we have is a way of bringing out the truth that one should regard everything as nothing in comparison to salvation. As Tertullian said, *Nothing that is God's is obtainable by money*.⁹ Interpreted correctly, salvation is only bought in the sense the person who accepts Jesus as Savior surrenders everything he has to Him. Jim Elliot, the young missionary who was martyred, encourages us when he said, *He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose*.¹⁰ The fact is, Jesus paid salvation's price in full. He made full atonement for our sins. Eternal life is free to the repentant sinner. It's a gift received by faith alone, not a reward to be earned or purchased by works of any kind. But to say that eternal life can be freely received by faith isn't to suggest that such faith is simple knowledge of certain facts. Saving faith is not a physical act like walking an aisle or raising a hand. Genuine faith is letting go of everything else & giving up all trust that anything or anyone else can gain us merit with God. It's total surrender to the Person & work of the Savior. As the classic hymn says, *Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling*.¹¹ There's an exchange in salvation in that the old is exchanged for the new. A familiar OT passage that speaks of salvation as the free gift of God uses the expression, **come, buy**, twice in 1 verse. **Every one who thirsts, come to the waters, & you who have no money come, buy & eat. Come, buy wine & milk without money & without cost** (Is 55:1). The buying isn't with money or any possession. Here, as in these 2 parables, a transaction is clear. The sinner gives up all the worthless things he has while receiving all the priceless things God has to give through Christ. What we give up in no way pays for salvation. Just the opposite, what we give up is less than worthless. Even our so-called **righteous deeds are like a filthy garment** (Is 64:6). Only Christ's death & resurrection *purchases* salvation, but the true believer will also be willing to pay whatever cost salvation involves. Apart from the willingness to yield all he has, a person's

⁹ Quoted by Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, & Eternity*

¹⁰ Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty*

¹¹ Augustus M. Toplady & Thomas Hastings, *Rock of Ages*

profession of faith is hollow & worthless. The rich young ruler of Mt 19 is the classic example of one who saw the value of salvation but refused to submit all he was & had to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Don't get me wrong, such surrender isn't a human work to gain salvation but it's a part of the saving work of God in our soul by the Holy Spirit. Surrendering possessions, whether big or small, present or future, can't buy salvation. They have no spiritual merit & are of no value to God. Surrender is necessary not because it can buy anything but because it's inevitable when salvation is truly wanted. Salvation that isn't desired above everything else isn't truly wanted. Salvation costs nothing in the sense of payment but everything in the sense of surrender. Jesus said, (Mt 10:37-39)

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, & he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. & he who does not take his cross & follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, & he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.

On another occasion He said, **If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, & take up his cross, & follow Me** (Mt 16:24). To take up the cross is to forfeit everything to follow Him. Speaking of coming to Him for salvation, Jesus said, **no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions** (Lk 14:28-33). Jesus couldn't have made it clearer that the person who won't surrender his old life will never have the new. Most people who consider receiving Jesus as Savior & Lord don't consciously list all their possessions to see if Jesus is worth sacrificing those things for. When they discover the infinite value of salvation, they simply yield to Christ. Their focus isn't on what they give up but on what they receive. But if their redemption is real, their lives will show a willingness to surrender whatever stands between them & faithfulness to their Lord. No one completely understands that principle at the time of their salvation, but true salvation is marked by a willingness to give up one's self. A person doesn't become saved by stopping his sinning. A person becomes saved when he exchanges his will & resources for Jesus' strength & power. That's the transaction: A willingness to abandon everything for Him. No one can come to Christ by stopping his stealing, cursing, immorality, greed, lying, or any other sins. But the one who truly belongs to Him will want to give up those & every other sin. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul gives his many advantages & achievements before he was saved. He writes,

I was circumcised the 8th day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, he says, I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, & count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ (Phil 3:5-8).

No one more strongly defends the freeness of salvation than Paul. Yet he says that, in coming to Christ, he willingly surrendered as worthless, everything he was & had. He was like the man buying the treasure & the merchant buying the pearl because he liquidated all of his self-righteousness, resources, & self-will for the lordship of Jesus. Paul knew that any price was worth sacrificing just to be found in Christ & to know Him. Paul lost his career, his reputation, & probably a lot of his family & his friends. & he was OK with that. The treasure, the pearl, was worth it & he never regretted it. He never looks back & says, *Maybe I'd be happier & more satisfied if I haven't given up everything*. No, in his eyes, everything he'd given up is rubbish in comparison to knowing Jesus Christ as Lord. Like the men who bought the treasure in the field & the pearl of great value, he gave everything he had for the priceless treasure he'd discovered. Have you come to that point in your life? It's my prayer that if you're drifting through life, you've stumbled upon Jesus today & recognize His infinite value. It's also my prayer that those whose hearts are honestly seeking after the truth, have been led to Jesus today. & for those of us who've found this treasure, if we love Christ as our treasure, & if we love people the way He does, we'll joyfully tell others of this treasure they can have as well. We won't be content to hoard our treasure. We'll long for others to have it too. Let us never forget what an immense sacrifice it was for the omnipotent God of the universe, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, to give up the privileges of divinity, to live within the constraints of a frail, human body, to experience rejection by His closest friends & countrymen, & ultimately to be abused, mocked, flogged, & executed in one of the most excruciating & shameful deaths ever devised. He sacrificed all for us. How dare we shrink from recognizing the Christian life as one of sacrificing all for Him? We're all called to give up everything for Jesus. There's no earthly treasure so valuable that it's worth having instead of Jesus. No relationship, no possession, no reputation, nor fame is worth more than belonging to our Savior. The return on our investment in His kingdom is eternal. Are you willing to set everything aside in order to follow Him?