



DAILY REFLECTION: Monday 1st June 2020

Valuing God's Kingdom

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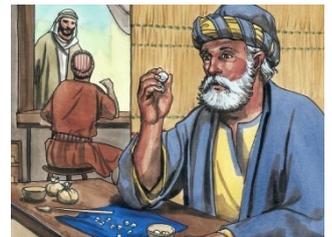
If someone offered you a million dollars to renounce your faith, would you be tempted? "Certainly not!" I can hear you reply. And I would say the same. Our faith is not up for sale! Of course, the question is a hypothetical one. It's not hard to come up with a noble answer to a hypothetical question! How much do we *really* value our faith and God's kingdom?



In a series of parables about the kingdom of God recorded in Matthew 13, Jesus told two stories to highlight its value:

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it." **Matthew 13:44-46**

These two stories, told and taken together, contrast the earthly, finite things we value in this life with the things of eternity. It seems the first man accidentally stumbled across the treasure hidden in the field. He immediately recognised its value as far outweighing all his other possessions. Buying the field gave him access to this treasure.



The merchant was different. Pearls were his specialty; he was constantly seeking the best he could find. He too, when he saw *this* pearl, had no hesitation in selling everything in order to gain it. Two different pathways; the same destination.

How did you discover the kingdom of God? Was it a "happy accident", or were you purposefully seeking? Or did you find your way into its blessings by some other route? How do you assess the value of God's kingdom to your life right now?

While the two stories emphasise *value*, rather than cost, there is a cost factor in both of them. And we're always careful when we speak of cost in relation to our salvation. Jesus paid the highest cost possible: his life – in full – so we can receive salvation as his totally free gift to us. However, living as citizens in the kingdom of God with all its rights and privileges also carries responsibilities. Just as the merchant had to relinquish his "lesser" pearls to fund the purchase of the pearl of his dreams, so some things are incompatible with living in God's kingdom and must be let go. Their loss is negligible compared to what we gain. Paul puts it like this: *"I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things."* **Philippians 3:8**

Have I started to lose sight of the real value of God's eternal kingdom? Am I holding on to something detrimental to my full enjoyment of its blessings, in this life?

Prayer: Praise God for the establishment of his glorious kingdom among us, and for the privilege of belonging to it. Pray for those not yet a part of it.

Song: "I'd Rather Have Jesus" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwZWTKjguX0>