

## 17A

*At the time of our Lord, those who had treasure often buried it in fields to prevent it from being stolen and with time they may have forgotten where they'd buried it. Years later, walkers would often stumble across it - a bit like treasure hunters do today. Even in antiquity pearls were highly prized, so the dealer in the story is prepared to go to great lengths to get his hands on the particular pearl in question. Jesus used these examples from everyday life to tell us something about the Kingdom of God.*

In ancient Jewish Law the person who owns the field also owns the treasure, no matter who buried it. In the parable, the man who found the treasure was determined to sell 'everything he owned', to buy the field. To an outsider this may have seemed a bit balmy but not to this man who had an eye for excellence.

Jesus tells us to store up treasure for ourselves in Heaven'. In order to do that, however, we must first discover it here on Earth.

When we enter into a deeper relationship with our Lord, who is Himself the pearl beyond price, other attractions in life will seem far less appealing. I once asked a newly ordained young priest if he missed the 'bright lights' of London where he lived and worked as a young man prior to entering the Priesthood. He answered 'not one little bit'. Jesus says; "where your treasure is there also is your heart"

Our closeness to Our Lord is the priority, taking precedence over everything else. We can say with St Paul; 'I consider everything in life as so much rubbish compared to the true joy of knowing Christ my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything'. Remember the man in the gospel went so far as to sell everything he owned to buy the field in question.

The finding of the precious 'pearl ' by the merchant seems to me to be the fulfilment of a lifelong personal ambition. Unless I'm earnestly seeking a closer personal relationship with Jesus, even though the pearl of great value may be 'staring me in the face', I'll have little inkling as to its true value. It would equate to 'throwing pearls before swine'. Or if my faith is more cultural than personal, then finding this pearl will not be a priority for me.

To what lengths am I prepared to go, to never surrender this treasure? Like the original owner of the field, who had forgotten where he buried his precious hoard, have I hidden or lost the pearl of my faith and forgotten how precious it once was.

If our relationship with God means a lot to us, then we'll want to bequeath it to the next generation? In ordinary life parents, for instance, would be loath to cut out from their will any of their children and leave them with nothing. But what nuggets of spiritual gold are we likely to bequeath to our offspring in the realm of personal faith in Jesus Christ? Will Christ ever become their pearl of great value?

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| <i>If we have found this treasure everyone will benefit and we will be at the same time laying up treasure for ourselves in Heaven.</i> |
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