



Our Lord likens the kingdom of heaven to a merchant searching for fine pearls. Upon finding that perfect pearl – the “pearl of great price” – he goes and sells all that he has and buys it (Mt 13:44-46). How does this relate to us? If we think about it, we are all constantly searching for people, places or things which promise to bring us either immediate or ultimate fulfillment. Jesus teaches us that the ultimate find, the “pearl of great price,” which is worth more than anything else is the kingdom of heaven. And what is the “kingdom of heaven”? It is life in Christ – a participation in the life of God.

Once we discover this great treasure what must we sell in order to obtain it? The merchant in the parable had to sell all that he had. I would like to offer just three things we need to “sell” in order to possess the “pearl of great price”—three keys to the kingdom of heaven.

- 1) **Our attitude.** For us to live in Christ we must have the mind, the attitude, of Christ who emptied himself, humbled himself, took the form of a slave and sacrificed himself for others. He washed the feet of his disciples and proclaimed by word and deed that his mission was not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. He said, “The greatest among you will be the servant to all.” To obtain the pearl of great price we must “sell” our desire to be served and acquire the attitude of a servant to all.
- 2) **Our will.** In the First Reading of the Holy Mass this week (1 Kings 3:5,7-12), God told Solomon to ask for anything he wanted, and it would be granted. Can you imagine? I wonder . . . what would I ask for? What would you ask for? Solomon responded, “Give your servant an understanding heart to distinguish right from wrong.” Great answer! Even God was impressed! He did not ask for riches, popularity, good health, etc., but for wisdom to know right from wrong. To obtain the pearl of great price, we too must “sell” our own notion of right and wrong and submit to the wisdom of God as He teaches us. through His Holy Catholic Church. what is truly right and wrong. Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me . . . not my will but your will be done.”
- 3) **Our life.** In the Second Reading of the Holy Mass this week (Rom 8:28-30), St. Paul makes a very comforting, and at the same time challenging, statement: “All things work together for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his decree.” This sounds great, but is it really true . . . ALL things? In order for us to obtain the pearl of great price, we must trustingly surrender our life, good times and bad, into the hands of almighty God. Jesus in the face of frightful suffering surrendered His life to God the Father even though His human will did not want to suffer: “If there is any way, let this cup pass . . . but not my will, thy will be done.” Our Blessed Mother, Mary, assented to the suffering and death of her beloved son, knowing by faith, that somehow good would come of it. We too must be willing to “sell” our preconceived ideas about what our life should or shouldn’t be; we must accept what comes, surrender to divine providence, take up our cross, and follow Jesus.

Yes, we are all searching for fine pearls: happiness, peace, love, joy, fulfillment. To find Jesus is to find the ultimate source of all that is good—it is to find the pearl of great price. To obtain this treasure we will need to enthusiastically, and even joyfully, sell all that we have: our attitude, our will, our life. Oh, but it is so worth it! In return we obtain the attitude, the will, and the life of God Himself!

Your Servant in Christ,
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