

**THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE**  
**Communion Sunday/ Dedication of Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes**  
**November 4, 2012 –Matthew 13: 45-46**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

*“The Kingdom of God is like”*...so begins almost every parable that Jesus tells about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is like a SOWER who sows seed, some on a hard path and some in rocky soil and some among weeds and some in good soil. The Kingdom of heaven is like the man who sowed good seed into his field but another came and sowed weeds there. The Kingdom of heaven is like the man who sowed a grain of mustard seed and it grew into the largest of shrubs and finally so large that it turned into a tree. The Kingdom of God is like a woman who loses a coin and who sweeps and sweeps, passionately and desperately until she finds it. The Kingdom of God is like a shepherd who loses a sheep and who leaves the other ninety and nine and goes off until he finds the one lost sheep. The Kingdom of God is like the man who finds a treasure buried in a field and sells all he possesses in order to buy that field. The Kingdom of heaven is like the pearl merchant who finds the pearl of great price, perfect and exquisite, and sells all his other pearls in order to possess it. These are parables Jesus told on what the Kingdom of God is like. Let those who have ears, hear. Let those who have eyes, see. Let those who understand, comprehend. So what is the Kingdom of God like?

**First, there is the one and the many.** There is the one pearl. There is the one lost coin. There is the one treasure. There is the one lost sheep. Oh, there may be many pearls, but there is only one pearl of great price; many coins, but only one about which the woman is passionate; many fields to purchase but only one in which the secret treasure of God is buried; many sheep, but only one sheep that completes the sheepfold of God. The Kingdom is that one thing which is needful; it is focusing on that one thing without which nothing else will happen; it is an obsessive compulsive focus on the inbreaking of the Kingdom into the world today; it is once we have a foretaste of what that future Kingdom is like, we want it, we want it completely, we will not wait, we will not be patient, we will not delay, we will not procrastinate but we will focus all our time and energies and all we are and all we possess on the Kingdom. It is not “the many” it is just “the one”. Our lives are distracted and filled up and unfocused because we focus our lives on many, many, too many things. Jesus’ parables say: Focus on one thing and focus on the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God in the here and now and you shall find the pearl of great price.

**Second, there are those who are saved and those who are not.** There is a time coming when Jesus will separate the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the weeds, the pearl of great price separated from the costume jewelry pearls of paste. There is a future time when Jesus, not us, will judge between the quick and the dead, between those weeds bundled to be cast into the lake of unquenchable fire and those grains of wheat reserved for eternal life in heaven. There are the few and there are the many. What separates them? --Those who understand the Kingdom and how it operates and those who do not. --Those who hunger and thirst for the righteous Kingdom to come and those who do not. --Those who go where they see and hear and experience the Kingdom of God actively at work and those who do not. If the Kingdom of God is breaking out and inbreaking into our world, then a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ wants a front row seat. Our lives, in truth, are focused on too many things that will never endure to eternity; too much wasted time; too many less important things competing for our heart. Desire firstly and foremostly the Kingdom of God today and in that day when we die we shall inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

**Third, the Kingdom starts small but then grows into something large and significant and miraculous and amazing.** The Kingdom begins with the smallest of all seeds. It begins with the small and insignificant. But it grows into something HUGE. It is the smallest sheep who wanders away but the good shepherd searches and searches for without ceasing until he finds it. It is the smallest coin that is lost, demanding the greatest effort to find it. It is the smallest grain of mustard seed planted in the human heart that finally bears the fruit of Jesus, the Son of God, living and abiding in that heart. That small seed producing the presence of Jesus, always is the inbreaking of the Kingdom. It is a small pearl that is the most exquisite; the perfect pearl, the one of great price, the one costing the pearl merchant everything else he possesses in order to possess it. Small things, insignificant things, make a big difference in the Kingdom of God.

**Lastly, God is all about seed-planting.** The Parable of the Sower –God plants a seed in the good soil of our heart. Parable of the Mustard Seed –God plants what seems to be a small and insignificant seed there but it grow up into the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God into our heart and into our life, and family, and community, and world. God plants a small speck of sand into an oyster. And the grain of sand serves as an irritant; the oyster secretes a substance that becomes a pearl, a little bit at a time, slowly and consistently the pearl grows and grows until finally it becomes a pearl, a pearl of great price sown into a Christian’s heart. It is a thing of great beauty. It is the very thing for which we were created. It is priceless and beyond measure. It is worth giving up your entire life in order to possess. It is worth dedicating all your time in order for that pearl to grow. It is worth desperately and passionately focusing all our heart, mind and strength upon, that the Kingdom of God might be born in us; that the Kingdom of God might break forth into our hearts; that the Kingdom of God might grow and grow and grow and make a difference, not just in us, but in many around us. The seed pearl has been sown into the oyster of our heart to make in us a pearl of great price and in order that we, too, might become a sower of seeds for the Kingdom.

**It is a pearl of great price for two reasons** –First, it was sown into our heart because Jesus in love died on a cross for it to be sown there. How great a price that is! But, second, it is a pearl of great price because it costs us selling every other “pearl” we value and possess in order to obtain it. It costs the first fruit of our heart and life in order for the pearl of the Kingdom of God to break forth from within us.

On the other side of the globe, in a place of darkness and poverty, in an out of the way place that the world long ago forgot, lacking in hope, in a small way, to children who most of the world would consider insignificant and without much value, on the other side of the globe, just one small child will open just one small shoebox, and in that spiritual transaction, all the love that has been packed within, all the prayers, all the love of Jesus, will be planted in that one small child’s heart. A small seed will be sown for the Kingdom of God. And that child will come to believe, and to have the Kingdom born within them, and to have purpose and hope and a future, indeed to have an eternal future because of that small mustard seed. Somewhere, over there, God will plant a small seed into a small heart, but it will produce the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God that will grow into something immeasurably large for Jesus’ sake.

**The Parable of the Shoebox.** The Kingdom of God is like that...let those who have ears to hear, hear. And Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*