

A Greater Harvest Awaits Those Who Live by This Biblical Principle

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matt 13:45-46)

During Roman times, pearls were an elusive and highly prized treasure. Symbols of wealth, prestige and power, only the elite of society could hope to acquire them. Their high value is no wonder, since harvesting pearls often meant diving to great depths without breathing equipment to gather oysters in hopes one contained a fully formed pearl.

Pliny, the world’s first gemologist, estimated that one set of pearl earrings during Roman times had value equaling over \$9,300,000 today. We cannot quite grasp the worth Jesus placed on a “pearl of great price”; but in that culture and that day, people might have imagined selling all to obtain such a prize.

In today’s throwaway culture, it is hard to imagine valuing anything that highly. But Jesus was making the point that the kingdom of heaven, relationship with Him, had greater worth than *anything* we could ever desire. Jesus is the pearl of great price.

Now consider that God, the Father, gave this pearl of great price to buy us out of the clutches of sin and death. John 3:16 reminds us that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

God places an extremely high value on the souls of humanity. He sacrificed His Son for each and every one. It is hard to conceive the magnitude of love He has for us that would drive

that kind of sacrifice. He sent Jesus to seek and save the lost so each one can be a pearl of great price in His kingdom.

How can we, His people, do less?

In 1999, Matt and Katy Stevens followed the call of God to Baltimore. While originally serving as youth pastors, God gave them a love for the people caught in the forgotten parts of the city—and that love moved them to action.

They started Somebody Cares Baltimore and pursued relationships with pastors and community leaders who want to serve and change their city. They laid a foundation by saturating communities with prayer and compassionate acts of kindness, and began meeting the felt needs in some of the most violent and impoverished area.

After years of serving in obscurity, through riots, strained finances and other challenges—they have seen communities turn around, lowering violent crime, renewed housing and increased opportunities in education as people have come to Christ. They are still laying it all down for the pearls of the God's kingdom.

Demos Shakarian was a successful rancher in California in the 1940s and 1950s. He was active in supporting evangelistic crusades and other Christian work but realized that the type of evangelism of that day was missing businessmen. He founded the Full Gospel Businessmen International organization specifically to reach that unevangelized segment of the population.

The strategy was to hold monthly business luncheons at which business people in each community would share about their faith in and walk with Christ. Countless men and women around the world have come to Christ through those outreaches because Demos was determined to seek and save the lost!

My family came to Christ when then-Air Force Captain Kris

Mineau (now a retired colonel), a brash fighter pilot in my dad's squadron, got saved while in a hospital room recovering from a near-fatal airplane accident. He and his wife shared the Good News with my parents, my siblings and me—regardless of how he might have sounded to another combat pilot. Salvation came to our house because of their willingness to look foolish, and we are forever grateful. They have shared the Good News with many others since then as well.

I could recount numerous other stories of people who have devoted themselves to sharing the gospel; hopefully you can think of some too. These stories and the lives of many others should serve as inspiration for each of us to be about the Father's business—sharing His Good News of salvation through Christ alone—with a hurting world.

If you don't know where to begin, start with prayer. Ask the Lord to give you His love for the lost and a renewed joy in your salvation. Remember your life before you surrendered to His love and consider how you have changed since that glorious day.

Then be ready to share your experience with people God puts in your path. God has uniquely designed you for the good works He has called you to do—so don't be intimidated by what someone else does or the style they may use to share the gospel. Remember that you have Good News to share, and multitudes are waiting to hear it!

A greater harvest is still ahead for those willing to dive into the kingdom to rescue more “pearls of great price!” We are all invited to join Him in the greatest treasure hunt of all time so we have a bounty of pearls to present to the King of kings.

Jodie Chiricosta serves as the vice president of Somebody Cares America/ International. Through her 25-plus years of experience in disaster response, humanitarian relief and

development with Operation Blessing and Somebody Cares America/Intl. as well as her continual involvement in a variety of community service and international outreach activities, she has long been an agent of positive change. Listen to Jodie's guest podcast episodes on "A Word In Season With Doug Stringer" on the Charisma Podcast Network.