

Application Guide: “How to Make Jesus Our Treasure” (Mt. 13:44-46)

Aug. 7th, 2005: Dale Shaw, Director of Outreach at College Park, preached on Jesus’ short parables about the treasure found in a field and the pearl of great price. The main thrust of the message was that of treasuring Jesus Christ as we would value a pearl or item of great worth. In light of sin, the cross, and redemption, he gave us several guides to help us treasure Christ as a way of life.

1. What are some practical ways you have found helpful in treasuring Jesus Christ in your everyday life? Above all else? As the central focus in everything you do?
2. *When we understand how wrong things are in the world, we will treasure Christ.*
 - a. In what ways in your everyday life do you see the “Seven Deadly Sins” (e.g. pride, anger, envy, lust, etc) glorified in our culture? In other words, what are some examples of our culture being upside-down from what God intended?
 - b. Is it possible that we have become so assimilated into our culture’s practices and so accustomed to what it deems as “right” that we don’t even realize how woefully often we sin against God? How can we know if we are living rightly?
 - c. When you see headlines regarding horrific events in the world (e.g. London’s bombing, Rwanda genocide, Sudan’s civil war, or the Southeast Asia Tsunami victims to name a few), how do you respond? Do these things cause you to treasure Jesus even more? How so? If we treasure Jesus Christ, what kind of thoughts will we have about the full realization/coming of the Kingdom of God?
3. *When we understand the value of a blood bought gift, we will treasure Christ.* When Christ died, he purchased for sinners everything they enjoy that was not part of condemnation (Piper). All we *deserve* from God is judgment for our sin!
 - a. What does it mean to boast/treasure only in the cross (Gal 6:14; cf. 1 Cor. 1:31)? What areas of your life (e.g. the mundane, trivial, work, your successes) do you rarely or never associate as gifts from God’s as a result of Christ’s sacrifice? Could it be that our lack of treasuring Christ, or our lack of thankfulness, can be attributed to the fact that we usually give God the credit for our salvation, but then tend to give ourselves the credit for everything else we have in life?
 - b. What are some ways you *expect* things from God (cf. Rom 11:35)? How does your life reflect a mindset that God owes you something for what you do for him?
 - c. How can we discipline our minds to remember everything is a blood-bought gift?
4. *When we understand how to achieve true greatness, we will treasure Christ.*
 - a. How does the world (and even the church culture) define greatness? How does Jesus define greatness (cf. Mark 9:31, 44-45; 12:41-44)?¹ What are some examples of people you know who embody “true greatness”?
 - b. How can we change our mindset from defining “greatness” by one’s status, popularity, prestige, or power, to defining by one’s character, heart, and commitment to loving God and loving others?
 - c. If it’s true that those who are really great in God’s eyes are those who serve, why is it that we only show appreciation to those in leadership positions or those in the limelight? What would our churches be like if we lived with Jesus’ definition of greatness in mind?

¹ Have you ever considered the fact that whenever you are unwilling to be a servant, you are essentially saying, “I’m better than Jesus”?