

“Live for One Thing”

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JOY IN THIS WORLD

Men have pursued joy in every avenue imaginable. Some have successfully found it while others have not. Perhaps it would be easier to describe where joy cannot be found:

Not in Unbelief -- Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born."

Not in Pleasure -- Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."

Not in Money -- Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

Not in Position and Fame -- Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

Not in Military Glory -- Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."

Where then is real joy found? -- the answer is simple, in Christ alone.

Matthew 13:44-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

[45] "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, [46] and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

In this first passage a man finds a field that is full of great treasure. He discovers that this field is worth much more than any other field, like it, because buried just below the surface is great wealth. He is so convinced of the field's worth, that he sells all he has to buy that ONE THING (the field). Consider this... the man most likely had a house, among other things. Why would he sell his house and go sleep on the ground in a field instead??? For ONE THING of great worth, the man was willing to give everything else.

In the next parable Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a pearl of great value. This pearl was worth so much that the business man was willing to sell all his other possessions, including many other pearls, to buy that ONE pearl. That ONE THING was of such great worth to the merchant, that he gave all else to get that ONE thing.

What you need to see is that these two men Jesus spoke of were not fools. They knew exactly what they were doing. They realized it would cost them everything to gain that ONE THING, but they knew the value of the ONE THING which they sought was so much greater than all that they had.

In our world today there are so many distractions. It is very easy to get so busy with life that we lose sight of the ONE THING that matters most of all. Jesus points out with these parables that a wise person will give anything for something that has higher value. If you could give somebody a dollar and they would give you back a hundred dollars, wouldn't you do it???

Of course you would!!! It's the same way with the Kingdom of Heaven.

We as believers ought to know what the ONE THING worth giving anything is. What is it???

What matters more than all else???

The Kingdom of Heaven!!!!

The kingdom of heaven is that which is eternal. The things of this world will rust and rot, but the Kingdom remains forever. Believers ought to live not for things temporary and soon fading, but for those things which remain even when time is no more. A fool is the one who spends all his time and energy seeking things that will mean NOTHING. Jim Elliot was a missionary to the Auca Indians. He and his companions were murdered by the same people they came to reach. Before he ever knew he'd die for his cause he commented on the importance of the kingdom.

Jim Elliot said, "**He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.**"

The world would look at a man like Jim Elliot who died in the jungle as a failure. God looks at Jim Elliot and others like him as a great success. God's kingdom is not of this world and if we die in this life protecting that which remains forever we make a worthy sacrifice. If God commands us to sell everything and go to some far away land to preach the gospel, we make a worthy sacrifice. If God asks us to lay down our reputation and to be seen as an outcast because of our faith, that is a worthy sacrifice. If we have to quit something we enjoy doing so we have enough time for God... that is a

worthy sacrifice. If God asks us to give all that we have in this life... that is a worthy sacrifice. The Kingdom of God is eternal... it is forever, and it is the ONE THING worth giving everything else to gain.

Read story on PGs 38-42 of Jesus Freaks Vol. II (Nagasaki, Japan 1597)

I am not saying you have to sell all that you have, or that having things is evil. I'm not saying that you should die for Jesus, though if it comes to that you should be willing. The point is that the kingdom of heaven matters more than anything else. If you are too busy with life to spend time with God... then you are too busy. Make time for God. If your plan in life is to make as much money as you can and buy lots of things, then your focus is off. Nice cars, fast boats, and big houses won't mean a thing when you die. Seek first the kingdom of God. Don't let anything else come in the way of gaining the kingdom of heaven. Seek the ONE THING that matters more than anything.

Pray