



Scripture nugget - The priceless pearl we need to possess

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it (Matthew 13:44-46).

By our good deeds alone it is impossible for us to pay our debt to God due to our sins. We are saved by God's grace through our faith in Christ and not by good deeds (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9). *No man can ransom even a brother, or pay to God his own ransom. The redemption of his soul is costly; and he will pass away forever (Psalm 49:8-9).* God is eternal. His love and justice are eternal. The debt of a sin against God remains eternal if unrepented by the sinner and unforgiven by God. Scripture tells us that for the purpose of redemption, the human race needs a high priest that is holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens, who can live forever in order to intercede for sinners and who has no need to offer sacrifice daily for sins but makes a single offering of himself once for all (cf. Hebrews 7:24-28). Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of the Most High God fits this unique and high requirement of the high priest. Though Son of God, Christ was made perfect through His obedience in suffering, and became a source of eternal salvation for those who obey Him, and He was designated by God the Father to be the perfect high priest for our redemption (cf. Hebrews 5:8-10).

By His Passion, Christ purifies us of our sins, makes us pure and holy, putting us into right standing with God the Father. We need to be justified by Christ's Passion in order to stand in Christ's righteousness when we appear in judgement before the throne of God. Heaven is for saints only. It is Christ's Passion that justifies us (cf. Ephesians 1:7, CCC1992). *Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man (cf. CCC1989). Justification is at the same time the acceptance of God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. CCC1991).* Righteousness of Christ is given through faith in Him to all who believe, Jews or non-Jews (cf. Romans 3:22). The only way to be seen as righteous by God is to believe in Christ, abiding in His Word. Mightily inspired by the Holy Spirit, St Paul expresses clearly the real value of gaining Christ. To St Paul, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ. For Christ's sake, St Paul had discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that he could gain Christ (cf. Philippians 3:8). It is God that gives purpose to everything. It is when we are able to let go of everything for the sake of God that we gain everything in Jesus Christ.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You are the power and wisdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24). Through Your work of salvation by Your Passion, You are my righteousness, holiness and redemption (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30). Give me the grace to be a good seed like You, to fall to the ground, die and give rise to new life. Thus, I can rejoice together with St Paul who denounced himself and everything else so that he can possess the priceless pearl that is You. With this priceless pearl in my possession, I can stand before God, fully justified in Your righteousness as though I have never sinned! Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.