

## *Margaritas in Heaven?* (Mat 13:44-52)

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There is a polka that used to be, and probably still is, played at every wedding and dance back in my hometown. It is called "In Heaven There Is No Beer." The chorus goes like this:

*In heaven there is no beer - that's why we drink it here;  
and when we're gone from here - our friends will be drinking all the beer!*

Well, I'm not sure if there will be beer in heaven, but as a good gift of God and part of His creation I would suspect that there might well be - but without the sinful aspects. After all, God saw everything He had made and it was all not only good, but *\*very\** good when considered in the light of how it was created for the benefit of the crown of His creation, man. As God tells us through His inspired hymnist in Psalm 104:14-15: He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, And wine that makes glad the heart of man. (NKJ) And whether or not there will be beer, we can be dead solid certain that there will be wine in heaven as it is a central part of His last will and testament and promise of life with Him at the Resurrection of all flesh - "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (NKJ)

All that aside, now that I have your attention, the question I have set before you today, in effect, "Will there be margaritas in heaven?" is a question of a different sort. It is a rhetorical question answered in the second parable of our Gospel text today: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful margaritas, who, when he had found one margarita of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." (Subj. just.)

You see, margarita is the Greek word for pearl. According to the usual understanding and teaching of this parable, the margarita (or pearl) is Jesus and His means of grace - the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. And the believer is the merchant who is willing to give up all of his worldly possessions because of his great love and desire for the perfect margarita, the pearl of Christ.

This second parable of our Gospel text is paired with and flows from the first: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Obj. just.)

Here, again, the usual understanding and teaching of this parable, is that the believer is a man who out of great joy will sell everything that he has if only he can be with Jesus and always have the Gospel message and hope that it gives.

Now this usual understanding and teaching of the parables is all well and good - as far as it goes. The problem, though, is that it doesn't go anywhere near far enough. For it is an understanding and teaching of the Law, which always leaves us short of the kingdom of God and wanting of Christ and His salvation.

The language is reminiscent of Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler. Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matt 19:21-22 NKJ)

Each and every one of us is like that rich young ruler when it comes to our own stuff. As Luther is said to have observed, "The last part of a man to be converted is his pocketbook."

We will pay \$4, \$5, even \$10 for the perfect margarita to go with our Mexican dinner. And we will pay whatever it takes of our paychecks to maintain our lifestyles as best as we can. But if that pearl of the Gospel gets in the way of our enjoyment of life, like the rich young ruler, we go back to the treasures we have worked so hard to enjoy. Hearing the Word; receiving the body and blood of our Lord can wait.

But can it really? Who of us, regardless of age knows for sure what tomorrow holds? But we act as if we do, and we value our worldly treasures, as did the rich young ruler, as things that we must treasure now lest we miss out on something, or have somebody else drink the beer while we go without.

This is why Jesus explains the dilemma of obtaining the kingdom of heaven to His disciples and to us: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt 19:26, NKJ)

So here is where we find the deeper, hidden, Gospel meaning of the parables set before us today. Their true understanding and fulfillment can only come through the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"[For] God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom 5:8-9, NKJ)

So let us look at the two parables again in this new light, the light of salvation.

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2, NKJ)

GOSPEL TEXT: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."  
(Obj. just.)

- The man who finds and buys the treasure is Christ.
- The hidden treasure is the church, the baptized people of God - all of YOU who believe and are baptized!

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers. (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

The field is the world in which His people will remain hidden until they shine forth on the Last Day, the Day of Resurrection, as the third and last parable in our Lord's trilogy reveals: "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire." (Matthew 13:49-50)

Jesus redeems the whole world for the sake of the elect and puts off the Last Day until all whom God has chosen from before the foundations of the world have been brought into His kingdom.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful margaritas, who, when he had found one margarita of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Subj. just.)

- Again, the merchant who seeks and buys the precious margarita is Jesus.
- The pearl is the believer -- YOU, the individual whom God loved so much He died for you.

Jesus sold all out and went all in for you! And even though He is God, He set aside all the power and glory that goes with being God and made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Phil 2:6-8, NKJ)

Now that which impossible with man has not only been made possible but has already been done once and for all - and for YOU! In Christ, you now live a life, imperfectly and incomplete though it may be because of your sin, yet perfect and complete through your baptism into Christ's death and resurrection.

So "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:19-21)

What is more important -

- the perfect margarita at your favorite restaurant and watering hole?

- any of the many things that often take precedence over hearing the Word of God yet will disappear on the Last Day?
- or the most precious and beautiful pearl that is Christ and every word and gift that proceeds from His mouth?

Just as Jesus has stored you up as a treasure and pearl in heaven, so too you can store up treasures and pearls in heaven as God uses you to give the treasure of Christ and His Word to your neighbors--the people in your lives.

Dear people of God, never forget that you are God's treasure, His perfected margarita. For you are forgiven all of your sins and given the kingdom of heaven – in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen