

The Pearl of Great Price

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Most people have cherished possessions on which they place very great value. How many stories have we heard where people have gone from safety back into a burning house on fire or back into a house as a tornado is approaching in order to collect an antique or an heirloom or some other item of immense value. Many times, the people lose their lives in the process. The house collapses from the fire or the tornado destroys the house while they are still in it.

In his article on [Benzinga.com](https://www.benzinga.com), Jason Collins wrote:

There's an old saying that goes, 'One man's trash is another man's treasure,' and a waste management company in Pennsylvania proves this to be true, recovering over \$10 million in discarded coins. Pennsylvania waste collecting company Ash Processing at Reworld, located in Morrisville, Bucks County, has collected over \$10 million from discarded coins. Fox Business reported that the company aims to "bridge the divide between trash and treasure" by sorting through piles of incinerated trash for any loose change they can find.

So, here is a company in Pennsylvania who is collecting over \$10,000,000 per year just finding loose change in the trash that people throw away every day.

People place value on the things that are important to them, whether those things are possessions, stature in society, fame, money and wealth, or security in life. That importance can include other people and loved ones.

All of these "things" on which a person places extremely high value are treasures to that person. That high value and worth to that person makes it a treasure to him or her. We, as humans, value the things to which we are attracted. This is true with other people whom we love dearly, with activities which bring us joy, with objects which are associated with memories which are precious to us. This attraction in our hearts raises the value of that person or item which we treasure. Jesus referred to this fact in Luke 12.

Luke 12:21 *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 33)

33) Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts.

34) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (KJV)

In Matthew 13 Jesus gave a parable about that high value and treasure that people have in their lives, and He was speaking to the multitudes in a litany of parables.

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

45) *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:*

46) *Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (KJV)*

My message this afternoon is entitled:

The Pearl of Great Price

This afternoon I would like to explore a more in depth way what the one most cherished treasure in our lives should be. A treasure that we must be willing to give up everything to have and to keep. We will explore this subject in 3 points.

The first point concerning our *pearl of great price* is:

1) **The Kingdom of Heaven is our Heavenly Father's spiritual kingdom.**

Jesus was speaking to the multitudes in parables, and His disciples asked Him why?

Mathew 13:10 *And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?*

11) *He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. (KJV)*

So, for the great majority of mankind, the Kingdom of God is a mystery. An important truth to never forget is that you cannot understand the Kingdom of God – the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father – unless you know who our Heavenly Father is and who He is in scripture.

Later in the same chapter, Matthew 13:45 states that again, *the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls. (KJV)*

In all the other Gospel accounts of Mark, Luke and John, as well as all of Paul's epistles, the term "Kingdom of God" is used for the spiritual Kingdom of our Heavenly Father. However, for reasons that we do not truly know, Matthew usual refers to the Kingdom of God as the Kingdom of Heaven. But he also uses the term "Kingdom of God" in some verses.

Matthew 19:23 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

24) *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

So, the Kingdom of God is interchangeable with the Kingdom of Heaven.

The phrase “*kingdom of heaven*” occurs 33 times in the New Testament, overwhelmingly in the book of Matthew. The phrase “*kingdom of God*” occurs 70 times throughout the New Testament. The term *Kingdom of God* in all these verses is *basileía tou theou*, meaning “kingdom of the God”. We understand that *ho theos (the God)* is God Our Father. So, *the Kingdom of the God* or *basileía tou theou* refers to the Kingdom of God Our Father.

With that in mind, let’s go back to Matthew 13, and we will reread the parable with that substitution.

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven [Kingdom of God] is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

45) *Again, the kingdom of heaven [Kingdom of God] is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:*

46) *Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (KJV)*

In Matthew 26, we’ll read a revealing verse about the Kingdom when Jesus was offering the wine to His disciples.

Matthew 26:27 *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;*

28) *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

29) *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. (KJV)*

So, Jesus called the Kingdom *His Father’s Kingdom*. In another very famous verse found in Matthew 6. There is a command by Jesus to all called-out ones of our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God [basileía tou theou – the Kingdom of God Our Father], and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (KJV)*

So, Jesus gave us a command to seek our Heavenly Father’s Kingdom and His righteousness. His Kingdom should be a focus in our lives.

Luke 12 is a parallel verse to Matthew 6:33.

Luke 12:31 *But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

32) *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (KJV)*

It is our Heavenly Father's pleasure and desire to give us His Kingdom. He can give it to us because it is His Kingdom. It is His to give. Back to Matthew 6. In His model prayer, Jesus refers to the Kingdom as His Father's Kingdom. Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray. Two parts of the prayer show that the Kingdom is the Father's Kingdom.

Matthew 6:9 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

10) *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

11) *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12) *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

13) *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (KJV)*

Jesus states that "Your Kingdom come" and "Yours is the Kingdom" or in common English "The Kingdom is Your Kingdom." So, Jesus taught His disciples (and by extension all of us) to pray that our Heavenly Father and His Kingdom would come to the earth and that the Father's will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is interesting that this simple sentence, being one of the most well-known and recited parts of scripture, is so misunderstood in its meaning. Furthermore, we all understand that God Our Father is the Father of the saints whom He has called to Jesus. We all know that from John 6:44. With that in mind, we will go Matthew 13 and we'll read one verse, verse 43.

Matthew 13:43 *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (KJV)*

The saints will shine in the Kingdom of their Father, who is our Heavenly Father. In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul wrote that we cannot enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom as physical beings.

1 Corinthians 15:50 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

51) *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52) *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53) *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (KJV)*

So, flesh and blood, physical humans cannot inherit and enter our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. Our corruptible, mortal and physical bodies must be changed into incorruptible, immortal, and spiritual bodies in order to enter His Kingdom. For the called-out ones, that change occurs at the Resurrection of the Firstfruits which is commonly referred to as the First Resurrection.

In His ministry, Jesus announced the good news of the existence of His Father's Kingdom, a spiritual kingdom into which we as humans will be given the opportunity to

enter if we will follow Him and His Son. Before His ministry, the world as a whole did not really understand the existence of our Heavenly Father's spiritual Kingdom and that we have the opportunity to enter into it. There is much confusion in the Protestant and Catholic churches and in the Churches of God on what the Kingdom of God actually is. I dare say that if you asked 10 members in the Churches of God what the Kingdom of God actually is, you would get back 10 different answers with slight and even major differences.

On the [Flames of Fire Ministries website](#) concerning the Kingdom of God, their literature reads:

“Jesus Christ is the king of the kingdom of God! He is the Messiah, the one who has been prophesied about in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament.”

In the literature of one of the Churches of God, the following excerpt appears: *“His [Jesus] first coming fulfilled a vital part of the gospel of the Kingdom – His sacrifice to make possible our forgiveness, justification and ultimate entry into the Kingdom. His second coming will bring the establishment of that incredible Kingdom.”*

Unfortunately, over the decades, the Churches of God have “cheapened” our Heavenly Father's Kingdom into a 1000-year reign of Jesus, with all of us as righteous saints ruling with Him. This is simply not the case, and this is definitely not the definition of the Kingdom of God.

Luke 1:30 *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.*

31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God [Kurios ho theos – Kurios without the definite article refers to God Our Father – the God refers to God Our Father] shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33) and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (KJV)

So, the throne that God Our Father gives to Jesus is the throne of David, a physical kingdom that Jesus will reign here on the earth. Jesus does not reign over the Father's Kingdom as King.

The truth is that our Heavenly Father's Kingdom is an eternal spiritual Kingdom which has existed forever in the past and will exist forever in the future. God Our Father has always been and will always be the King of His Kingdom.

The second point concerning our *pearl of great price* is:

2) The understanding of the identity of our Heavenly Father is key.

The Churches of God seem to believe in a generic, non-specific, non-defined God and in a specific church organization, whereas we believe in a specific, well-defined God and in a general church organization comprised of the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father, no matter what that organization is.

It is incredible that something so simple is so very misunderstood. A minister in the Churches of God was once asked "What is God?" The answer from the long-time minister was "Well, God is God!" Very generic, non-specific, non-defined.

We have received such an incredible blessing from our Heavenly Father to understand who He is in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The Bible reads completely differently once we understand. The Bible just simply comes alive.

The Bible becomes a story about the love of God Our Father as Yehovah in the Old Testament and the love of God Our Father as our Heavenly Father in the New Testament, and how Jesus did everything with God Our Father throughout history, from the creation of man, to working with Abraham and the patriarchs, to working with the nation of Israel, to implementing the plan of salvation by living as a man and dying for our sins, and to calling and working with the called-out saints.

One of the responsibilities that Jesus has is to reveal the Father to whom Jesus chooses to reveal Him.

Luke 10:21 *At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.*

22) My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (NLT)

Our Heavenly Father has chosen for whatever reason to reveal His identity in the Bible to us. And again, that revelation of His identity in scripture is a game changer for us all. God Our Father has opened our eyes to this glorious truth concerning His identity so that we may know Him better, and consequently, know more about His Kingdom.

Ephesians 1:17 *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

18) I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

19) and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength

20) he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

21) *far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*
22) *And God [God Our Father] placed all things under his [Jesus'] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,*
23) *which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*
(NIV)

So, the Apostle Paul wrote that it is God Our Father who has appointed Jesus to be the head of the Church of called-out saints and that it is God Our Father who gives us His Holy Spirit so that we may know Him better.

When we begin to look for our Heavenly Father in the scriptures in the New Testament, we suddenly find Him everywhere. In these verses that we will now read, every occurrence of the word *God* in Greek is *ho theos*, the God, God Our Father.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God [God Our Father] hath prepared for them that love him.*

10) *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*

11) *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

12) *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

13) *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (KJV)*

Again, God is not some generic, vague, indistinguishable Being. The Greek use of (*ho theos* – the God) throughout the New Testament is a specific term referring to a specific Being. The New Testament would actually be confusing to a Greek, because the Greeks would never use the term *ho theos* without further clarification and identification, because the Greeks believed in many Gods. The Greeks always used the generic term *oi theoi* (the gods). Again, the New Testament referred to a specific Being, and that Being is our Heavenly Father.

The Apostle John gives a recipe for knowing our Heavenly Father. In these verses, every occurrence of the word *God* in Greek is *ho theos*. The noun *love* is *agape*, the divine love from our Heavenly Father, and the verb *to love* is *agapáo*, to have that divine love from our Heavenly Father.

1 John 4:6 *We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

7) *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God:*

8) *He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. (KJV)*

As we deepen our relationship with our Heavenly Father, we take on more and more of His characteristics in the way we think, in the way we act and react, in the way we

speak, and in the way we treat others. Jesus exhibited all of those characteristics of our Heavenly Father during His physical life on the earth, and He left a wonderful and perfect example for us to follow.

The knowledge of the identity of our Heavenly Father is key to understanding so much about the Bible. The Churches of God casually use terms that they never define. What is the Kingdom of God if you don't know whose Kingdom it is? What is the law of God if you don't know whose law it is? What are the people of God if you don't know whose people they are? What is the Spirit of God if you don't know whose Spirit it is? What is the temple of God if you don't know whose temple it is? So many unanswered questions in the past that we now have answers for. All because we understand more clearly the identity of our Heavenly Father in scripture.

The third point concerning our pearl of great price is:

3) The pearl of great price is our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

So often in the past, the Churches of God have stressed that our Heavenly Father has called us to be in the Church, or to be in the Kingdom ruling with Jesus, or to be teachers and kings and priests. In the past, we have skipped right over the most important element of our Heavenly Father's calling. God Our Father has called us to Jesus in order to have a deep and personal relationship with Him. That's the main emphasis. Everything else is secondary, and everything else flows from that relationship. This truly is our pearl of great price that each one of us has in our possession.

But what will we do with that pearl of great price? To help answer that question, we will explore three sub-points.

a) We understand the value of our relationship with our Heavenly Father

We will go back to Matthew 13, where we started the message.

Matthew 13:45 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:*

46) Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (KJV)

In this parable, Jesus said that the merchant man knew the immense value of the pearl when he found it. He understood that it was so valuable that he went and sold all that he had – everything that he had – in order to purchase it. It became his most prized possession. Without knowledge, people do not understand the value of items that are in their possession. There is a show on TV called The Antiques Roadshow, where people will bring different items from their attics and storage closets and the antiques dealers will examine the items and estimate their worth. Many people are shocked when a painting covered in dust that was just sitting in the garage or attic turns out to be worth tens of thousands of dollars because it is a one-of-a-kind painting by a famous artist. Some items have turned out to be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, all just

collecting dust at someone's home, just because the owner did not know the value of what he or she had.

Furthermore, the value of items is often intrinsically personal to each individual person. What is extremely valuable to one person, because of its attachment to relationships, memories, and circumstances with that person, has absolutely no value to another person. This other person does not have the knowledge of the relationship, memories, or circumstances attached to that item by the first person.

There is a video on YouTube where a father is at a table with his 3-year-old son. The father places two stacks of \$100 bills totaling \$10,000 on the table and then places two out-of-the-box Oreo cookies on the table. The father then asks the child which he would rather have: the \$10,000 or the two Oreo cookies. The child looks at the \$10,000 without any expression. But his face lights up when the father places the two Oreo cookies in front of him. A big smile and wide-open eyes come across his face with eager anticipation. Without hesitation, the child chooses the Oreo cookies. The father reiterates to the child, "Now you're sure that you want the two Oreo cookies instead of the \$10,000?" Again, without hesitation, the child, with his eyes firmly fastened on the two Oreo cookies, shakes his head yes, and then he picks up the cookies.

The boy did not see and understand the value of the \$10,000 being offered to him. In his mind, it would have been foolish to choose green paper over two delicious Oreo cookies. The world feels the same way about our Heavenly Father and about His truth and His identity.

1 Corinthians 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of [ek - out from] God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*

13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (KJV)

The Greek word for *foolishness* in verse 14 is *moría*, [Strong's #3472](#), meaning "folly, absurdity, foolishness". So, unconverted mankind views the deep things of our Heavenly Father as folly, as being absurd, and as being foolish. To unconverted minds, the deep things of our Heavenly Father have no value or meaning or applicability in their lives. When we try to discuss the identity of our Heavenly Father in scripture with others, many times the answer we receive back is "What difference does it make?" There is no value placed on this incredible knowledge. But brethren, we understand the value of that knowledge and we treasure that knowledge of His identity.

b) We must be willing to give up everything for our relationship with our Heavenly Father

Back to Matthew 13, where we started the message. This is a verse which keeps on giving.

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

45) *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:*

46) *Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (KJV)*

In this parable, Jesus said that both the man and merchant sold all that they had in order to purchase the field and to purchase the pearl. They were willing to give up everything they had in order to gain the treasure. Our Heavenly Father expects the same from us. What do we value more than our relationship with Him? What else in our lives is placed at a higher level than our relationship with Him?

Exodus 20:1 *And God spake all these words, saying,*

2) *I am the LORD [Yehovah – our Heavenly Father] thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

3) *Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (KJV)*

This first commandment commands us to always put our Heavenly Father first in all things. Nothing is to be more special; nothing is to be more important; nothing is to be more valuable in our lives than our Heavenly Father and our relationship with Him. As a result of Jesus' love for us in His willingness to die for our sins, and as a direct result of His shed blood for us, we must be His disciples in order to have that special relationship with our Heavenly Father. Jesus said that we must be willing to give up everything.

Luke 14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (KJV)*

Jesus also stated something important about treasure.

Matthew 6:19 *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20) *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

21) *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (KJV)*

Is our heart in our relationship with our Heavenly Father? Is that where our treasure is? Is that relationship the most important part of our lives? Are we willing to give up everything to continue and to deepen that relationship?

c) We must be fervently preserving our relationship with our Heavenly Father

We've all heard the old saying "*Familiarity breeds contempt.*" With time, human nature places less and less value on things as the newness wears off, as the special becomes

ordinary, and as the excitement becomes routine. This happens every day with physical possessions. This happens every day with physical relationships. This can also happen over time with our relationship with our Heavenly Father, if we allow it. John wrote about a congregation who allowed the newness, the specialness, and the excitement of their relationship with our Heavenly Father to fade.

Revelation 2:1 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;*

2) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4) Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. (KJV)

One of the main ways that we leave our first love is neglect over time.

Hebrews 2:1 *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

2) For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

4) God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (KJV)

The Greek verb for *neglect* in verse 3 is *ameléo*, Strong's #272, meaning "to neglect, to be careless, to disregard, to view something as being without significance and without perceived value".

So, the saints are warned not to let the truth and excitement about the identity of our Heavenly Father slip away. We are warned not to neglect our relationship with God Our Father which leads to salvation.

This Greek verb *ameléo* is used in another verse. In 1 Timothy 4 the Apostle Paul exhorted and warned Timothy to be careful not to neglect the gift within him.

1 Timothy 4:14 *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (elders). (KJV)*

Paul warns us that we cannot neglect the Holy Spirit within us because it is the critical component in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Earlier in that same chapter of 1 Timothy, Paul warns about departing from the faith and searing our consciences against our Heavenly Father.

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.
(KJV)

Just as a hot branding iron permanently alters and scars the skin and hair of a cow, neglecting our relationship with God Our Father can permanently and irreversibly alter and scar our conscience to where we do not value His relationship anymore.

This short verse of only four words is so important to our spiritual lives.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 *Quench not the Spirit.* (KJV)

The Greek word for *quench* in verse 19 is *sbénnumi*, Strong's #4570, meaning "to stifle, to suppress, to quench, to extinguish".

The Holy Spirit is our lifeline to our Heavenly Father. Without it, we have no lasting relationship with Him. With neglect, we can indeed stifle, suppress, quench, and extinguish that lifeline. But there are actions we can actively take each and every day to preserve our relationship with Him.

Prayer (talking with our Heavenly Father),

Bible study (our Heavenly Father talking to us),

Meditation (using critical thinking on what our Heavenly Father has told us through His Word)

Fasting (humbling ourselves before Him)

are crucial for deepening our relationship with Him. How much of these are we doing on a daily and recurring basis? Is our prayer life just a series of the "gimmies" – "give me this – give me that"? Or our prayer life only a series of the "give them" – give them this – give them that"? Is part of our prayer life devoted to just talking with our Heavenly Father, sharing with Him our dreams, our hopes, our disappointments, and our successes?

When we pray to our Heavenly Father, do we tell Him how excited we are about seeing Him the first time at the Resurrection of the Firstfruits? Do we tell Him how excited we are to spend an eternity with Him and His Son, learning from Him, hearing His stories of how He and Jesus created all things, the sub-atomic particles we keep finding more and more of, atoms, molecules, cells, plants, animals, planets, solar systems, stars, galaxies, and the universe? Do we tell our Heavenly Father how excited we are to be able to see the spiritual universe in the future? That universe we cannot presently see is more spectacular than the physical universe!

Do we study deeply into the scriptures? Or do we just read scriptures like we would a novel? This is how our Heavenly Father talks back to us. Do we meditate on what we read? Do we meditate on how the scriptures are applicable in our lives? Do we fast to grow closer and closer to Him? We must not neglect the Holy Spirit, and we must not neglect our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Rather, we must be continually preserving and deepening that relationship.

In today's sermon, we have explored the deep value of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. An opportunity and high honor that He has opened up to us and we have explored this subject in three points.

- 1) The Kingdom of God is our Heavenly Father's spiritual Kingdom.
- 2) The understanding of the identity of our Heavenly Father is key.
- 3) The pearl of great price is our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
 - a) We understand the value of our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
 - b) We must be willing to give up everything for our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
 - c) We must be fervently preserving our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Brethren, our Heavenly Father has called us to the high calling of having a deeper understanding of who He is, not just as a generic undefinable Being but as a dynamic, all-powerful, loving Father who has His actions recorded throughout the Bible. He has called us to have a deeper understanding of His immense love and of His plan of salvation and of our role in that plan. And He has called us to have an ever-deepening relationship with Him, which is the source of everything else in our lives. Where do we place most of our energies and attention in our lives each day? On what do we place the most value and importance in our lives each day? Where is our treasure? Where is our heart? Where is our hope?

Brethren, what is your pearl of great price?