

A MACEDONIAN MOMENT

MACEDONIAN PRIESTLY PEARLS

⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

II Timothy 1:8

²² Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, performed great exploits. He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. ²³ And he struck down an Egyptian who was five cubits tall. Although the Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. ²⁴ Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty warriors.

I Chronicles 11:22-24

⁴ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:46

- I. Positive results from life's irritations
 - A. A piece of sand is not life-threatening, but it is an irritation in your eye or in the interior tissue of an oyster.
 - B. Oysters and humans handle irritations quite differently.
 - C. Humans remove their shoe if there is a stone.

- D. God has provided the oyster with the special secretion called Nacre (naykur).
- E. The oyster can secrete Nacre around an irritant to make it less bothersome. The secretion forms a protective sac around the foreign substance.
- F. Over time, Nacre covers the sand until, at last, it produces a pearl.
- G. The oyster uses the sand to inaugurate the production of a pearl.

II. God and pearls

- * Suffering can produce either resentment and bitterness, or pearls of great beauty.
- A. The pearl is the only gem that is formed by a living organism.
- B. It is the most fragile of all gems, easily scratched, and is dissolved quickly in contact with acid.
- C. If shattered, it is useless.
- D. The pearl is the only gem from a living thing which exists only for the sake of beauty. It has no other utility.
- E. Deep suffering produces great pearls.
- F. Other gems are the result of sediment or carbon that has undergone extreme heat and pressure in the bowels of the earth.
- G. While all gems have commercial value, a large, perfect pearl that developed in an oyster without human manipulation can command a greater price than any well-cut diamond.

III. 12 Pearly gates (Revelation 21:21)

²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

- A. Why would God use fragile pearls as the gates to a city made of solid gemstones?
- B. The city walls are 1500 miles tall.
- C. Where would Christ get 12 pearls big enough to make 12 gates?
- D. In the God-man's death as our redeemer he endured all suffering, covering all with his blood, and thereby produced priceless pearls for eternity.

IV. What are you covering with Nacre in your life?

- A. The irritation of misunderstanding.
- B. The irritation of legalism.
- C. The irritation of slander.
- D. The irritation of betrayal.
- E. The irritation of doubt.
- F. The irritation of undeserved abuse.
- * Choose to get better and not bitter.
- * The pearl is the oyster's answer to what harmed it. What's yours?

V. Seven steps of priestly service (John 13:1-7)

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the

Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"⁷ Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

- A. Priestly death proceeds service.
- B. Priestly loyalty issues in service.
- C. Betrayal is essential in priestly service.
- D. Security of identity is imperative for priestly service.
- E. Inconvenience is a trait of priestly service.
- F. Priestly service always involves being willing to look less than you are.
- G. Priestly service must be done.