In Jesus you are God's pearl of great value.

Where are pearls formed?

In an oyster.

How are pearls formed in an oyster?

Oysters do not make pearls automatically.

Pearls are formed when an irritant, foreign object, or dirt, gets into the oyster.

The oyster produces a nacre – a fluid, a liquid – that covers the dirt.

Layers upon layers of nacre that hardens into a pearl.

The point is, the pearl is made FROM dirt.

It is normal to want to present the best of ourselves to God and others.

If you want a job, you tell employers about all your achievements, not your failures.

If you want a romantic relationship, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or get married, you show them the best of yourselves. You don't reveal the bad bits.

If you want to do well in school, you try to prove what you do know, not what you don't know.

The problem is that you and I do fail, you and I are not always wholly lovable, you and I do not know everything.

The greatest truth is that God loves you unconditionally anyway.

In Jesus you are God's pearl of great value.

Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

There are different layers to this sentence.

1. **In Jesus, you are God's pearl of great value.**

God sent Jesus into the world to give up his life so that God could purchase you by Jesus' blood.

God values you that much.

You and I have parts of ourselves that we could understand how God might love you: a kind part, a loving part, a funny part, a helpful part.

You and I have parts we might find it difficult to see how God could love: a part of us that feels ashamed, guilty, unworthy, lonely, depressed, or unlovable.

THAT part of you especially is God's pearl of great value.

The sacrament of reconciliation is not a torture chamber. It's an oyster shell.

It is not coming before a cosmic police officer who you have offended and is angry with you.

Like dirt in an oyster: God accepts your dirt gladly.

Because this is the ONLY way He can produce a pearl.

Just as a pearl is formed through nacre over dirt.

God covers this part again and again with his love.

The more you bring to God, the bigger the pearl!

2. **Make Jesus your pearl of great value**

The church teaches that there are rays of truths in other religions and philosophies.

Don't feel like you need to dismiss everything someone from another faith says necessarily.

There are rays of truth.

However, Jesus didn't say that he was 'A' way to the God the Father.

Jesus said he is 'THE' way to God the Father.

Don't bet each way on Jesus – like he is one prophet or teacher among many.

He is God's only begotten Son.

Go all in.

Make Jesus your pearl of great value.

3. **In Jesus, find the pearl in others**

As you and I believe that my and your sin is God's most valuable part, something changes.

You and I begin to love others in a different way.

Not as I and you love – only the perfect bits.

But as God loves – the more secret and sensitive bits.

The person in your life who can be annoying or hurtful.

You know who this person is!

You are able to love them at their worst.

You find the pearl of great price in them.

- **Jesus reveals that you are God's pearl of great value**
- **Make Jesus your pearl of great value**
- **Find the pearl of great value in others**

This is God's kingdom coming on earth, Europe, UK, England, London, Kensal New Town, your family, in your life, as it is in heaven.

Prayer

Lord, thank you that I am your pearl of great value.

Jesus, come into my heart.

I make you my pearl of great value.

Help me to find the pearl in others.

So that your kingdom comes to this city, nation, and the world, as it is in heaven.

In Jesus' name, amen!