

July 26, 2020
The Reverend Rob Towler

Story-teller William R. White tells this story :

Many years ago ... when people still believed in the power of dreams .. Isaac (son of Aaron) lived in the polish city of Krakow. A poor man, Isaac worked long hours each day to support his family. At night, exhausted from his strenuous labour, he slept soundly.

One night, Isaac dreamt that he was walking over a bridge in the far off city of Prague when a voice told him to look in the water for a valuable treasure. The dream was so realistic that he could SEE the treasure box in the crystal clear water. Night after night, he dreamt the same dream.

After two weeks, weary from lack of sleep, Isaac walked the three days journey to Prague to see what he could find. He easily located the bridge of his dreams and began to look underneath, when a policeman hauled him off to the city jail for questioning.

In the interrogation room, three large men demanded “What is a Jew doing under a bridge in the Gentile section of the city?” In desperation, he blurted out the truth ... telling the men that he was looking for a treasure he had seen in his dreams.

“You foolish foolish man” the arrested officer shouted.

“Do you still believe in dreams?” I am too smart for such nonsense. Why – for the last two weeks, I myself have dreamt that in the city of Krakow, in the home of a peasant named Isaac (son of Aaron) there is a treasure hidden under the kitchen stove. But you don’t see me wasting my time looking for someone and something that doesn’t exist.”

Roaring with laughter, the other two policemen grabbed the peasant by his coat and threw him out into the street. “Go Home Foolish Dreamer” they shouted.

Isaac, son of Aaron, dusted himself off and walked back to his home in Krakow. There he moved the stove in the kitchen, found the treasure buried there … and lived a long and happy life.

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It seems as if people have been searching for treasure since the beginning of time. They once searched in fields, in the mountains and under the sea … if they could just find some gold, diamonds, even pearls – they would be happy.

Today – people are still looking for treasure. Except now they look for it in the weekly lottery, at the casino, in the stock market. If only they could hit the jackpot, all their troubles would be gone.

I guess – in one way or another – we are ALL treasure hunters. We are looking for that ONE THING that will make us completely happy.

The movie CITY SLICKERS,,(one of my all time favourites) is all about one man's search for that ONE THING “which would help him find his smile again”. And really – there is nothing wrong with that.

In today's gospel - Jesus encourages us in our search. He loved searchers ... He has sympathy for those who were looking (even if they were looking in all the wrong places and for all the wrong things). He understood their desire ... their hunger ... and he would point them in the right direction. But he could do nothing for those who were smug and content.

He compared the Kingdom of God to a priceless treasure - something which was worth “everything we have”.

One of the commentaries I use says:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ... is a very simple concept. It means to know that one is a child of God, with a divine dignity and an eternal destiny.

It means to know the meaning of life – and how to live it.

Our primary purpose in life is NOT to be successful, or even to be satisfied. It is to live properly. If we miss that – there is no way we can ever be happy (no matter how many pearls or gold we may find).

The only question then is HOW.

*How are we to live in this world?
If you find the answer you have found the pearl..*

But unlike other treasures ... The Kingdom is not some fable. Not an illusion or a mirage for a weary searcher who has traveled far and wide.

It is real. Jesus' parable tells us of the overwhelming joy that comes when you discover it. When that sense of God's presence, and the depth of his love for us, washes over us ... and how WONDERFUL that is. It brings peace to the heart, relief to your mind, and all around beauty to life.

It is amazing to experience this JOY even for a moment, but to find it ... and be able to STAY there ... is truly to have found the kingdom, and live in it.

To experience life in the Kingdom, means having to let go of all other things (all other priorities). And I don't mean letting go in the sense that we have to give them up entirely (because we still need them to live our physical and emotional lives here in this world). But we need to let go of our dependence on those other treasures .. to not make them the be-all and end-all of our lives.

Without God, life is not bearable ... it makes no sense whatsoever. But being in relationship with him is the truest treasure we can hold ... because it defines us.

It gives us a sense of who we are and where we're going.

***Only God can really give us what we need ...
... If we find him, we've found it all.***

It doesn't mean we have all the answers ... It doesn't mean we don't have to struggle with life as it unfolds around us. In fact – we may have more questions, and more work *because* we believe.

Our faith calls us to a life of continued searching and discovering and questioning.

Because it's not just on Sundays, or in churches, or at monumental times that we find God (and feel his presence). In Jesus' story the man found HIS treasure in his daily routine (while he was digging).

The treasure WE look for (the kingdom of God) is hidden here ... in the life we live day by day.

Those who belong to the Kingdom will know real joy here. But that joy is only a small taste of what we will experience in the next life – when we come into the fullness and the glory of God's eternal Kingdom.