

WHERE IS YOUR HEART?

Excerpts from the book of Fr. P. Ribes, s.j. "To Be Like Jesus"
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Your Heart Will Be Where Your Riches Are

Intent of these notes:

- ✓ *To caution us on the dangers of riches.*
- ✓ *Greed for money and peace of mind can't go together.*
- ✓ *Gilded hearts cannot enjoy life.*
- ✓ *Wealth enslaves us.*

Mathew 6/ 19-21

“Do not save riches for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust destroy and robbers break in and steal. Instead, save riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break in and steal, because

Your heart will always be where your riches are.”

MR. GREEDY A Parable)

Many years ago, there lived a very smart and hardworking man. His name was Mr. Greedy. Mr. Greedy was proud of his big and strong safe. There, in his safe, he kept all his treasures and wealth! His only ambition in life was to stuff his safe with gold, jewels, precious stones and cash.

Forever he kept muttering to himself: “If ever I have to be happy, I have to fill my safe to bursting point. Then only, I will feel secure. Then, and only then, I will relax and enjoy life for the rest of my days.”

Impelled by a consuming passion to collect and hoard more and more gold, jewels and cash in his safe, Mr. Greedy toiled and moiled from dawn to dusk. He was forever on the move, always in a rush, never allowing himself a single minute to rest and relax.

After long days of hard labour, he finally did manage to get his safe filled to the brim! Not a single coin or a nugget of gold could be pushed in! So full it was! Mr. Greedy felt very happy! In exultation he said:

“What a lucky man I am! I did it! I did it! Now I have enough money to satisfy all my wants and whims for the rest of my life! Now, I'll enjoy life and be happy.”

Next day, early in the morning, Mr. Greedy opened his safe just to look at his storehouse of wealth. He wanted to gloat over his great riches, gold, jewels, precious stones, wads of currency notes and the other valuables stored in his safe. As he opened the safe, Mr. Greedy's heart fell. He got the shock of his life! His safe was half empty!

He cried out: "Have robbers come and stolen my wealth? But, how could they? My safe is strong. It is not possible. Besides, the door has not been opened. No one has tampered with the lock. Right now, however, I'll inventory my goods to find out what is missing."

Mr. Greedy took a very minute count of his stored wealth. At the end, he was at a loss! Nothing at all was missing! Not even the tiniest coin had disappeared! Everything was in perfect condition! In bewilderment, with a broken heart he said:

"It's funny, really funny! My money, my gold, my jewels, everything is intact. Then, why is my safe half empty?"

With disappointment he cried: "Then, I'll have still to wait for some time to be able to enjoy myself and have a happy life. Yes. I'll work very hard again to get my safe packed to the brim. I will, I will! And then....!"

With that, he locked his wealth and - his heart too - in his safe and with fresh resolve, Mr. Greedy plunged anew into a frenzy of activity, exerting every nerve of his to collect more and more money and gold and precious stones to stuff his safe. At last, he did it for a second time! His safe was bursting with wealth and riches of every type. Mr. Greedy's heart again was bursting with satisfaction.

For a second time, he told to himself; "What a lucky chap I am! I did it! Indeed, I did it! Now surely, I have enough riches to satisfy my whims and fancies for the rest of my days! Now at last, all that is left for me is to rest and enjoy!"

Next day, when Mr. Greedy went to open his safe to peep into his store of wealth; again he was shocked beyond words! Once more, his safe looked half empty! His wealth had shrunk and his heart shrunk too. Carefully and meticulously, he again checked his goods anew. Yet, again nothing was missing. He could not figure out what had happened to his half-empty safe!

In despair he cried out: What? The same trouble again? Everything is intact. Once, twice, three times I have counted my moneys, checked my gold and jewels. All is in order. What the devil has happened? When shall I see my safe filled? When shall I be able to enjoy life and be happy? No, no, I have to see it full. Only then, will I be happy, only then, will I rest and enjoy!

Mr. Greedy threw himself anew into a frantic struggle to stuff his safe to the full. He wasted his entire life in a futile endeavour to fill his intractable safe to the brim.

At last, he died without ever getting an opportunity of resting and enjoying life! Little did he realize the root of his troubles? He had locked his heart in his safe!

Question yourself

1. Who does Mr. Greedy of the story symbolize in real life?
2. What does the safe in the parable stand for?
3. What was happening to the safe of Mr. Greedy? Why did it always look half empty?
4. Could such sort of safe be ever filled to capacity?
5. Compare the safe of Mr. Greedy with your heart:
 - ✓ What sort of heart you have?
 - ✓ What are you storing in it?
 - ✓ Will you ever be able to fill it to the brim? How?
6. Where is true happiness found? Where do you look for it?
7. What are you aiming at in life? What are you struggling for?
8. In the budgeting of your time and money what are your priorities?

Thoughts for Reflection and/or an Input

- The problem with Mr. Greedy and with us all is not with the goods we have, but with our hearts which keep growing greedier and greedier in proportion to the goods we own.
- The safe of the story stands for the human heart, the storehouse of desire.
- The more we have, the more we desire to have. Our greed grows in proportion to our wealth.
- Our hearts can never feel satisfied just with earthly wealth and material goods. St. Augustine said: Our Hearts are made for Oh, God, and they will never be at rest until they rest in Him.
- The more likes and wants we satisfy the more wants and needs our insatiable hearts create for us.
- Mr. Greedy is a symbol of us all - modern men and women - obsessed with acquiring more and more temporal goods with the hope of securing more and more satisfaction and ever greater happiness in this passing life.
- Our entire life becomes a futile and frantic race to catch an ever eluding mirage that mesmerizes us.
- At the end, we reach nowhere, never getting satisfaction at all, but only boredom and frustration.

APPENDIX A Chinese Fable

Money and Wealth Blind Us

There was a very greedy man. Once, when he entered a jewellery shop, he saw a lot of glittering gold on the counter.

He went straight to the counter and in full view of all the by-standers grabbed the gold and made off.

At the gate of the shop the guards stopped him and asked him:

“How could you steal the gold when everybody was seeing you?”

“When I saw gold,” he replied, “**I saw no one! All I saw was gold!**”

