

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY - C - JULY 31, 2016

STORY - THE ROLLING COIN

"THUS WILL IT BE FOR ALL WHO STORE UP TREASURE FOR THEMSELVES BUT ARE NOT RICH IN WHAT MATTERS TO GOD"

A STORY:

"A WISE OLD MAN - CALL HIM OSCARE - COULD BE A WISE OLD WOMAN- ONCE OWNED A PRECIOUS GOLDEN COIN.

ONE DAY, AS HE SAT GAZING AT THIS PRECIOUS COIN AND REJOICING IN ITS BEAUTY, A THOUGHT OCCURRED TO HIM:

"IT ISN'T RIGHT THAT I SHOULD BE THE ONLY PERSON TO HAVE THE PLEASURE OF POSSESSING THIS GOLDEN COIN. WHAT USE IS IT IF NO ONE SHARES IT?"

AND HE WENT OUT AND GAVE THE COIN TO A PASSING CHILD.

THE CHILD COULDN'T BELIEVE HER LUCK. SHE COULDN'T TAKE HER EYES OF THE SHINING COIN...

THEN SHE HAD A SUDDEN IDEA: I'LL GIVE THIS COING TO MOM. SHE NEEDS SO MANY THINGS. THIS COIN WILL MAKE HER VERY HAPPY.

OF COURSE, THE CHILD'S MOTHER WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE COIN, SUCH AN UNEXPECTED SOLUTION TO SO MANY OF HER PROBLEMS.

SHE PONDERED IN HER MIND AS TO HOW TO SPEND IT AND WHAT TO BUY FIRST.

AS SHE WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR AND THERE STOOD A STREET BEGGAR.

"POOR SOUL," SHE THOUGHT. HE HAS NOTHING, AND WE ARE ABLE TO GET BY"

AND SO SHE GAVE THE GOLD COIN TO THE BEGGAR.

THE BEGGAR WAS SPEECHLESS. THE BEGGAR WAS SPEECHLESS. THIS COIN COULD BE TURNED INTO FOOD FOR A MONTH.

HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE SUBWAY WHERE HE SLEPT AND THERE HE NOTICED A NEW RESIDENT, JUST ARRIVED.

THE POOR GUY WAS BLIND AND DISABLED. HE HAD NO CHANCE OF GETTING ANYWHERE NEAR TO FOLKS WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO SPARE A COIN OR TWO.

"I GUESS HE NEEDS IT MORE THAN I DO," HE THOUGHT TO HIMSELF.

AND HE PRESSED THE GOLD COIN INTO THE BLIND MAN'S THIN, COLD FINGERS.

THAT EVENING THE WISE OLD MAN, OSCAR, WALKED THROUGH THE DARK SUBWAY.

HE NOTICED THE BLIND, DISABLED BEGGAR AND STOPPED TO SPEAK TO HIM.

THE BEGGAR COULDN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME ANYONE HAD BOTHERED TO SPEAK TO HIM....

AFTER A WHILE, THE WISE OLD MAN PUT HIS ARM AROUND THE BEGGAR'S SHOULDER.

I'VE NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE YOU, EXCEPT MY FRIENDSHIP, HE MURMURED....

A TEAR ROLLED ACROSS THE CHEEK OF THE BLIND BEGGAR...

HOW COULD HE EVER REPAY THIS GIFT OF HUMAN KINDNESS THAT HAD CHANGED A DARK NIGHT INTO A NEW DAWN?

WITH HIS SHAKING, ACHING HANDS, HE REACHED INTO HIS POCKET,

BROUGHT OUT THE GOLDEN COIN AND GAVE IT TO HIS NEW FOUND FRIEND.

"THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME, CARING ABOUT ME", HE SAID.....

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ISN'T THIS STORY THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF OUR GOSPEL STORY...

DIDN'T OSCAR DO, WHAT OUR RICH FARMER WAS UNABLE TO DO?

THAT IS GENEROUSLY GIVE AWAY FROM HIS ABUNDANCE....AND TRUST

REMEMBER NOW OUR FARMER WITH THE BUMPER CROP WAS CLEARLY A LANDOWNER - SO ALSO IN THE TOP 1% OF THE POPULATION IN HIS TIME HE PLANS TO BUILD AN EVEN LARGER BARN IN ORDER TO STORE FOR FUTURE YEARS - BUT NOT SIMPLY FOR HIS OWN WELL-BEING....

VILLAGE SMALLHOLDERS WILL HAVE TO COME TO HIM AND BORROW GRAIN - SO HE CAN CHARGE AN EXORBITANT PRICE IN HOPES OF CONFISCATING EVEN MORE LAND FOR HIMSELF

WHEN IS ENOUGH - ENOUGH? I SUPPOSE IS THE QUESTION....

WHEN DO YOU START GIVING SOME OF IT AWAY FOR OTHERS?

AS FAR AS WE KNOW - THAT WAS NEVER A QUESTION FOR THE FARMER....

ONE OF THE MANY THINGS I LOVE ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY IS THAT - IN MY EXPERIENCE - THAT IS ALWAYS A QUESTION YOU ARE ASKING YOURSELVES.....

WHEN CAN I GIVE SOMETHING OF WHAT I HAVE AWAY GENEROUSLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS AND GROW RICH IN WHAT MATTERS TO GOD....

I DON'T EXPERIENCE THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY AS DEVOTED TO ALWAYS BUILDING BIGGER AND BETTER BARNS TO STORE MORE AND MORE STUFF....

I LEARNED SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES THIS WEEK....

IT WAS AN VERY GOOD WEEK FOR ME. (BETTER THAN TENN/ST. L)

ONE REASON WAS THAT SINCE I WILL RETURN TO WORK UNDER CONTRACT WITH UD IN AUGUST I DECIDED TO DO SOME HOUSECLEANING/ROOM CLEANING IN MY OFFICE AREA.....

I'M NOT A "HOARDER" BUT I DO SEEM TO ACCUMALATE STUFF -

ESP. ON THE FLOOR....

WOW! HOW THERAPEUTIC CLEANING UP MY OFFICE SPACE HAS BEEN...

AND GETTING RID OF SOME THINGS I DON'T NEED,

E.G. CLOTHES. A HUMIDIFIER

RENEWING, REFRESHING....

NOW I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF SOME BOOKS....PROBABLY A DOZEN OR SO...

STUFF, I'VE ACCUMALATED SINCE MY LAST MOVE 3 YRS AGO...

NOW "GREED" AND "HOARDING" ARE NOT THE SAME THING....

BUT BOTH ARE BASED ON ANXIETY.....

WHEN OUR LIFE IS DRIVEN BY GREED AND/OR HOARDING WE ARE

LETTING ANXIETY CONTROL OUR LIVES...

OUR GOSPEL STORY TODAY AT ITS CORE IS ABOUT ANXIETY - AND HOW

NOT TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY.....

WE ALL KNOW ABOUT ANXIETY THESE DAYS DON'T WE?

IT'S ALL AROUND US AND IT IS CONTAGIOUS.....

OUR GOSPEL SPEAKS TO THAT TODAY.....

IT'S RESPONSE IS COUNTER INTUITIVE.....

IT ENCOURAGES US NOT TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY BY ACCUMALATING

MORE AND MORE WEALTH, MORE AND MORE STUFF TO RELIEVE OUR

ANXIETY TEMPORARILY.....

RATHER IT ENCOURAGES US TO GROW RICH IN WHAT MATTERS TO GOD....

WHAT MATTERS TO GOD????

*IT ENCOURAGES US TO GROW TRUST AND SIMPLICITY IN OUR LIFE.....
WHICH, OF COURSE, MEANS A FEW MINUTES, EVEN A FEW SECONDS IN
OUR DAY IN PRAYER...A PRAYER OF TRUST IN THE MORNING, MIDDAY
AND AT NIGHT PERHAPS...*

*IT MEANS TAKING A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF SIMPLICITY.....GIVING
AWAY SOME OF THE THINGS WE HAVE....ESP. THINGS WE DON'T NEED*

*LET US PRAY TODAY FOR AN ANSWER TO QUESTION - WHAT
WOULD A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF MORE TRUST AND MORE
SIMPLICITY MEAN FOR ME???????*

AND PRAY FOR THE COURAGE TO TAKE THOSE STEPS.....

TRUST AND SIMPLICITY....