

Parable

Suppose there is a man, dressed in rags, standing on the street with a tin cup begging for coins day after day. The world deigns to drop a little something from time to time and he is thrilled to think his methods are successful. So he continues his practices.

Then one day he sees a man looking at him closely and holds up his cup thinking to receive a few coins; maybe even enough for a good breakfast. Instead the man comes up to him and asks, "Are you so-and-so that formerly lived in such-a-place?"

"Yah, What is it to you?" he replies.

"Well I am authorized to give you this document."

"What for?" the beggar asks, troubled that it could be a citation for begging in public.

"If you read it carefully it will give you information on how you can obtain a huge fortune that has been bequeathed to you by a relative. You just have to go to the address included and present this document to the person there, they will make all arrangements and the fortune, including a mansion to live in will be all yours! I'll even go with you if you like."

"What nonsense", "the beggar growls, "Go away with your silly paper and your foolish stories! I am not as gullible as all that! I have to stay here or I won't get enough to eat today. You are wasting my time! You are just trying to trick me so you can take over this good spot on the street!"

"You are so-and-so aren't you?"

"Yah, but I don't swallow any dumb story about a fortune for me if I go to some old address!"

"Well," the man replies. "I have done what I can. Here, at least take the paper and read it for yourself. Then you will see what I am saying is true."

The beggar snatches the paper and stuffs it into his ragged jacket and goes back to begging, turning his back on the messenger, who walks sadly away, shaking his head.

Day after day he reaches out to the world for a pittance; sometimes he gets a lot and eats well, others he goes without even a hot drink. The paper stays in his pocket unread, and after a time he thinks of it no more. Then a long spell of cruel weather comes and few people are in the streets. With his ragged clothes and hardly getting any food, he falls ill and is picked up, unconscious from the street and taken to a charity hospital run by a Christian association.

They first want to get him into dry, warm clothes quickly. As they strip off his dirty rags, wet with the weather, they come across the old paper, still stuffed down into his pocket. Desperate to find some way of knowing who the beggar is, they dry it carefully and read it. They note the name and the contact information and while the nurses care for the fellow, a messenger is sent to the address to tell the people there about the man they have found in such dire straits.

The response is positive and quick; an official with a brief case hurries to the hospital and when the man regains consciousness, there sitting by the bed is a well-dressed business man who greets him by name and reaches out to shake his hand.

The beggar, confused as he finds himself in such comfortable circumstances, says nothing, but looks on amazed, trying to make some sense of it all.

“Mr. So-and-so, How glad I am to meet you! I am the representative of your estate, and you have no idea how glad I am finally to make your acquaintance!”

“Uh? Me? You? My ‘estate’?”

“Yes! Your Estate; do you perhaps recall years ago when my associate met you and gave you this document and informed you of it?”

“Err, No, not really—err, yah maybe I do; I forgot all about that silly old paper. Yah don’t mean to tell me that it was for real do yah??”

“Oh yes, it is for real! And your Elder Brother, Who is joint heir with you, has been most anxious to have you come home with Him and enjoy all the estate has to offer! Rest in the hospital here a few days and when you are well I will escort you home to your Father’s Estate.”

The man is silent for a while then replies; “Oh, what a fool I have been! To have slighted and mocked the invitation and the messenger who brought it to me, all these years! All the suffering and loneliness I went through when reaching out to the world for bits of help when there was comfort, food and shelter, as well as loving care awaiting my response to the invitation! Give me the paper; let me read it for myself.”

He reads, “Dear Mr. So-and-so; I delight to inform you that you are heir to a rich estate and inheritance and your loving family invite you to return home at once! Just Come unto me all ye who labor for the world’s favors, I will give you rest from your suffering and privation; it is all paid for and ready for you to lay claim to it! Signed: Your Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.”

Implications: All of us need to persist in seeking for the lost heirs of the Master’s Estate. If we are repulsed at first, we are not to give up. There are so many who need kindness and caring, and some at least will wake up to realize it is all true.

But what if no one finds the poor foolish beggar and his body instead goes to the mortuary. What a laugh the world’s morticians have when they find the unused document that could have given him everything!

Every day let our words reflect the courtesy and kindness of our Master, and none of us forget to keep offering the invitation, even where it seems most unprofitable to do so and all we meet is scorn and resentment.

Amen. =^..^=