

Story about the young adult man at the neighborhood picnic

He came and was overwhelmed at what he saw. He kept repeating, “I didn’t know anything about this!”

A Parishioner who lives in the neighborhood invited him to the picnic.

Until that very moment, this young man had thought that happiness was in a small brown bag; getting high

And what did he see that overwhelmed him?

People sharing life together:

- **Sharing food**
- **Sharing time**
- **providing games for children,**
- **Dancing to music**
- **Celebrating life together**
- **Everyone, even this young man, a stranger, was welcome.**

I believe what the young man for the first time in his life was experiencing what Jesus meant when he said, “I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.”

(PAUSE)

Why was this young man so overwhelmed? Because the wisdom of this world tells him...and us ... that we can attain happiness by getting rich, accumulating wealth, protecting our assets. But this young man

was experiencing another kind of way to live, by forming a community of care.

The very same wisdom of getting rich and protecting your assets was as alive in Jesus' day as it is in ours. That may be why Jesus spoke more about money and accumulating possessions so often.

Remember:

- The story of the young rich man who came to Jesus seeking fullness of life but could not give up his possessions.
- The story about the man who built bigger barns to store up his wealth in grain but died that night.
- Last week we heard Jesus remind us that you cannot serve two masters either you serve God or money.

In today's Gospel we hear the parable about the rich man and Lazarus.

- Rich man was well off
- He thought fullness of life was to be rich and protect your assets
- He knew about Lazarus; he knew him by name, (how many beggars do you know by name?) but ignored him
- He knew about Moses and the prophets who has spoken about sharing with those in need
- The rich man never investigated another way of living

Over and over again Jesus tells us that getting rich does not insure happiness here or hereafter. Rather he proclaimed in word and action that only by using our gifts and talents in service of others will we find lasting happiness. That is what was happening at the picnic. People serving people.

Placing ourselves at the service of others may sound simple, but it is not. How do we empty ourselves of all our desire for wealth and begin to make service of others the hallmark of our lives?

Steps to this self-emptying process:

- **Becoming conscious of how blessed you are:**
 - **Prayer: breath; place to live; food to eat, clothes to wear; friends to grow with; a God who has poured out is love for us by forgiving us and calling us into community of love.**
- **Reflecting on our gifts and talents:**
- **Placing our talents and treasures at the spread of God's kingdom.**
- **Pick up the Stewardship booklet**
- **20% of the community contributes 80% of the income; how great it would be if we could grow to 50% giving generously of their talents and treasure**

Comment of people who hoard in their homes. Piles of things everywhere. It would seem simple if someone just took them away for a weekend and cleaned out there house. I heard a psychologist say

recently that the person returning would literally have a heart attack. The reason people hoard is that they fear some loss in their childhood. Until they deal with that fear, they will not take care of cleaning their houses.

It is the same for those of us who give little of our time and talent. We need to have a conversion of heart. We need to experience the mercy and healing of the Lord before we can hand over our gifts to the Lord. That is why developing a deep relationship with the Lord is so critical to being a good steward of our gifts.

I want to thank you, the community of Corpus Christi, for providing me everything I need to bring Good News to that young adult man at the picnic. It is only by the generosity of this community that we can reach out to others like him and share Christ's mercy and healing.