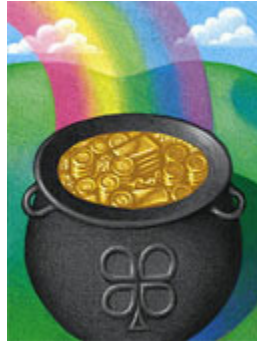


The Search For Happiness



Once upon a time a young man set out on a long journey to seek and find happiness one of the most illusive of all gifts to find on earth. His journey would take him high and low through many countries, business endeavors, hour of study, and research of the arts, science, philosophy, and history of mankind only to end up empty handed time and time again.

But then one day while in a library he happened upon an old man reading a book called Happiness. Shocked at first sight, he blurted out; “Happiness”! The old mans lifted his eyes from the book and said; “Ah, yes, happiness very, very illusive, but I know where it can be found”.

“Really”? The young man replied. “Yes” said the old man; “ Well, please sir you must tell me where?”

The old man then said; “OK at the end of a rainbow”.

“Well, said the young man, I was always told it is a pot of gold found at the end of a rainbow, not happiness?”

Now the old man's expression changed from kindness to a deep cold dark stare and with a twinkle in his cold dark eyes he said with a wicked grin; “Ah yes, most people do believe that little story, but no one has every found the gold have they? But happiness, it is there if you can catch up with it”.

Well from this day forward the old mans words rung out in the young mans heart loud and clear, and every time he'd see a rainbow in the sky off he'd go chasing his most illusive dream of happiness.

But over the many years his heart started growing bitter and cold as cold and bitter as the old man's eyes at the library he had meant so many years ago. By this time he had grown very old using up the last of his vital power chasing his endless quest for happiness.

In his lasted ray of hope one day he caught sight of the most awesome beautiful double rainbow he ever witnessed in his many years. And just for a moment he was stunned by in deep dark colors in its magnificent beauty and form.

Suddenly he snapped back to his senses; "Ah, there no time for this nonsense I must go and find my precious happiness before I die".

Some how he knew down deep inside, a small voice kept saying over and over again; "this is it, this is the one". "Oh please, please, let it be this time, I've searched my whole long miserable life, I am tired and wore out, just let it be the one, this time?"

This rainbow was his last hope it would end his life long quest for happiness. He was absolutely shocked when the rainbow ended of all places right at the door of the old house he had grown up in. His parents had owned this old home so many years ago, he had completely forgotten about until this moment when he saw his rainbow ending at its front door.

Now his heart pounded hard inside his chest as he tried to hurry up the hill in front of the old house. Once there he quickly opened the old gate, walking up the up the sidewalk to the front door, but the rainbow had moved; "where did it go, he shouted!"

The old porch creaked as he used his last little strengthen to push open the front door. Stepping inside old memories flooded his mind; "Oh stop that!", he said to himself; "There is no time for this nonsense; where is my rainbow? I got to catch it before it get away again".

He started hurrying even faster, blindly knocking away the old cobwebs hang from the ceiling. He madly dashed from room to room looking for his precious rainbow, but it had eluded him once again. Now fighting back his tears he shouted: "It's not here, I hate this old dump; darn these foolishly old memories!"

Forgetting his mission but for a moment; “ That's Mom and dads room; over there is my two brothers room, and my little sisters room; I'd all but forgot them over these many years, I wonder how they're all doing now days? And just look at that; Sammy's little box where he slept each night; Oh, how I loved that little dog, he was my best little friend I've every had, how I miss him now”.

And just as quickly his thoughts changed; “Where's my rainbow? Only one more place to look in this old pile of junk”. So up the old rickety stairs into the attic the last room in the house. He slowly opened up the door his heart pounding hard than he could ever remember before.

And there he beheld the end of his rainbow, streaming through an old broken window with shutters. His heart swelled with such joy; “Oh, my rainbow at long last, my rainbow, I can't believe my eyes; finally I have found it”.

The rainbow mysteriously ended on-top of an old leather chest, he felt his knees weakening and his hand shaking as he reached to open the old lid of the chest. Opening it ever so slowly fear gripped his heart, but inside was only to founded old papers, books, and pictures, junk! He, stood stunned and cried aloud; “Junk, lousy junk, where is my happiness?” He was so mad he turned over the chest and started digging through old pile of junk like a mad-man who had losted his mind; finding nothing, he broke down and started weeping bitterly.

Well it was a very pitiful sight, here sat this old man in a pile of junk; broken weeping like a little child with no hope. As he sat there with tears running down his cheeks the sun came through the old window and shinned through one of his tears creating a small rainbow ending upon the pile of old junk. He humbly looked down at a pile of old pictures:

“Well I'll be darned, here's a picture of my first bicycle, isn't that some thing I remember working so hard for that bike all summer mowing yards, I wanted that shinny new bike more than anything in life, I wasn't like the rest of the kids playing all summer wasting time. I remember now I rode that shinny new bike off to get my first real job. Then I started saving for my first car, and look at this would you believe it, it's a picture of my car, man what a beauty she was.

I was never prouder on that day, first kid on the block to have his own car, I thought then if I could just get that car I'd be the happiest man in the world, wow was I wrong, funny how many years and payments I've made since that old car.

I wonder what else is in the pile of old junk? Well by gaily, I can't believe it here's a picture of my first deer rifle what a sweet shooting gun that was; how many beans I had to pick in the hot summer sun just to get that gun. And just look at this my first business, man that was the best day of my whole life.

I'd finally made it, every one in town knew my name on that day, of course; smiling to himself; I had my name painted across the front of the whole store"; Chuckling to himself.

Then he thought; "where are the pictures of my family and friends?" digging through the whole pile he could not find one, not one picture of a human being at all?

"Well that is truly strange, he thought, not one picture of a person, or flower, not a living thing, I wonder why, there should be at least one, I feel something is wrong here?" Then he looked even closer moving a pile of junk; "Oh here's one, what is this a picture of? Well look at this, Isn't that old man having a great time with that dumb donkey, holding that long pole with a carrot hanging from a string; dangling right in front of his nose, what a stupid beast".

He thought, "I've never seen this picture before I wonder how it got here, and why was it here? Looking a little closer at the picture, wait just a minute, I think I recognize that old man; look at those cold dark eyes and that sly wicked grin".

Now turning the picture over he found faintly written on its back these words; "My name is Materialism, now do you finally see?" The old man sighed deeply saying:

"Oh my God in heaven that dumb ass is me!"

1Tim.6:7-10 Proverbs 23:4,5. James 4:11-17 Luke 12:15

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