

**Articles and Sermons :: P A R A B L E seeker and master - Sundar Singh****P A R A B L E seeker and master - Sundar Singh - posted by SteveHale (), on: 2012/7/23 23:03****P A R A B L E**

seeker and master

Once upon a time, there was a rich man who enjoyed a life of luxury. But, unhappily, he had no son. He used to say to his friends and wife, "Oh, pray for me that God may mercifully grant me a son who will inherit my property and keep up the name and fame of my family." After some time, God answered his prayer and gave him a beautiful and promising boy.

His parents entertained many plans for their newborn.

Their expectation and hopes knew no bounds. When he was six years old, his father arranged for him to have the best possible education, which continued until the age of fifteen. He was also trained in all the skills and responsibilities of manhood.

At the age of eighteen, he married and the young couple began to lead an exemplary family life that was the envy of everyone who knew them. Blessed with peace and plenty, they enjoyed all the pleasures of the world and knew nothing of woe or worry. But some months after their marriage, the young man's parents, whom he loved so much, died of cholera.

While he was grieving over the loss of his parents, thieves broke into his house and carried away all his money and valuables, leaving the couple destitute. Prosperity makes friends and adversity tests them, so one by one all his "friends" deserted him.

He could not help exclaiming in despair: "Oh, what shall

I do and where shall I go? We are expecting a child, but alas! I shall not rejoice as my dear parents did at my birth, nor shall I be

able to do as much for the child as my parents did for me. Oh, how fickle is fate!" His good wife comforted him, wiped his tears with her tender hands, and said: "My dear husband, don't weep and worry. Trust in God. Whatever he has done, he has done well; and whatever he may yet do, it will no doubt be for the best. Do not lose heart."

In time, the child was born into these adverse circumstances.

The man nursed and attended to his wife and child as best he could, but unhappily, the child died after a few hours.

In tears, the man went to bury the little body and, on his return home, found his wife unconscious. Unable to revive her, he

held her head in his lap. After a short time, his wife opened her eyes. They looked at each other lovingly but could not speak.

The husband was exhausted from grief and bereavement, and the wife was weak from the difficult birth. After a time, her eyes closed forever.

The shock was more than the young husband could bear.

He collapsed, unconscious, and God only knows how long he remained senseless on the ground. One of his neighbors happened to pass that way and discovered all that had happened.

He immediately went and called friends and acquaintances in the neighborhood. They all came and arranged for the funeral of his dear departed wife. At the graveside the young man stood, weeping bitterly, and cried out: "Oh, that I myself and all my sorrows and sufferings

could have been buried in this grave instead of my dear wife! My dearest friend and companion, my beloved, has departed leaving me all alone. Alas! How can I bear such misfortune!Â”

With that, he fainted again and fell to the ground. This heart-rending sight moved to tears all who were there. They gently lifted him up and carried him home. After he had rested, they tried to console him, saying: Â”What is done is done. It is useless for you to grieve any more. Sooner or later, we all have to leave this world, every one in his or her own turn.Â”

Grappling with the death of his loved ones, the man began to think more and more about spiritual things. After some time, he went to a spiritual teacher to find inner peace. But nothing brought comfort or peace into his distress. In time, he went into the jungle and began to live alone as a hermit in a cave. He prayed earnestly to God: Â”O my Creator and Master, have pity on me, a miserable sinner! Either take me away from this world or grant me a glimpse of your truth, so that I may find new life.Â” For days, the man waited and prayed constantly to God, and at last his prayer was answered.

Early one morning, a man approached his cave. Seeing the newcomer approaching, the man thought to himself: Â”Perhaps, like me, this man has suffered much, is now weary of this world, and is wandering about in search of some shelter and peace. Or maybe he is some traveler who has lost his way.Â” When the man reached the cave, he greeted the brokenhearted hermit with great affection and sympathy. The hermit rose with respect, spread a blanket on the ground, and invited the stranger to sit down.

Hermit: May I have the pleasure of knowing your name, honored stranger, and may I ask where you have come from and what brings you to this lonely spot?

Stranger: You cannot understand the meaning and significance of my name. I am the shepherd and have come down from on high to seek and save my lost sheep.

Though the hermit did not fully understand his remarks, the stranger's personality and words made a deep and wonderful impression on him. It was as if, for a moment, his black heart were illuminated by the stranger's glorious and shining presence. He felt as if he himself was the lost sheep and that the shepherd had come to help him. He had a great longing to know the stranger better.

Hermit: For how long have you been on this errand?

Stranger: Since the beginning.

Hermit: I can see that you must be a prophet. Please tell me more about yourself, bless me, and make me your disciple. Stranger: I was and I am and I will be. I have been called God-with-us, the Holy One, the Prince of Peace and the King of Kings. I appear to those who seek me, and in the fullness of time I came as the Anointed One to bring release from sin. Now I have come as the Shepherd in answer to your prayer. I have come to give you peace.

Hermit: O, my God and Master, today I have found the author of life. Now I care nothing about my earthly losses, because I have received everything. From now on, I am your child and your servant. You are everything to me. Why did you remain hidden from me for so long?

Stranger: Until now, you were not ready to see me as you see me now. But in reality, I have always been with you. You rejoice to see me sitting beside you, but it is

more important that you recognize my presence in your heart and soul. Even your hardships have prepared you to know me better. These trials have expanded your heart and made you aware of your own need for inner peace. Only by coming to the end of your own strength, did you finally turn in faith to God for help.

Hermit: O, how happy I am! My whole being longs to praise you and give thanks to you, my Master. But more than the praise of my lips, I know that you desire inner gratitude, a heart open to the overflowing joy of your presence. Forgive me, Master, if I dare to ask you one more question. How do I know that what I now experience is real and not some product of my imagination?

Stranger: My son, do not try to grasp spiritual truth with your mind. Many say that spiritual experiences are subjective or imaginary, but it is not so. What you experience is real. You have sought long to open your inner eyes and ears to eternal truth. Have I not promised that if you seek, you shall find? Rejoice, then, that your prayers have been answered and you can believe because you have seen me. All the more should those rejoice who believe even though they have not seen me as you have.

Hermit: O Master, I long to be your true and faithful servant. Grant that I may never lose the blessing I have received today. Protect me from doubts or indifference, and give me grace that I may be faithful to the end.

Stranger: When we stand on the edge of a precipice and look down, we feel dizzy and are afraid. The depth may be only a few hundred feet. But when we gaze at the heavens, though our eyes may range over much greater heights, we are never afraid. Why? Because we cannot fall upwards. When we look up to God we feel that we are safe in him and that there is no danger whatsoever. But if we turn our faces away from him, we are filled with terror lest we fall from reality and be broken to pieces. Always watch and pray. Never mind if you lose your earthly wealth. This has to happen sooner or later. Now you have real wealth that no one can ever take away from you. Indeed, be grateful if the loss of your earthly riches and honor empties your heart and makes room for real and abiding treasures. Remember I am with you always.

In reverence and gratitude, the hermit bowed down at the feet of his Master. Looking up, he saw that the stranger had vanished. From that day forth, he gave himself, heart and soul, in service to the Master