

Story Time with Jesus—Heart Healing

2018-2021 or so (given to CQ)

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Stories with the Master

Thinking you are seldom liked helps you to stay very close to Me. I dwell with the humble.

Like going into a crowd and wanting to feel appreciated, you scan it to see who is feeling the most dejected and despised and you go to befriend them. They are grateful for your companionship. This is how it is with Me too. I find those of low degree—or rather who actually realise that they are, and then I comfort them. These make Me feel the happiest. They laugh at My jokes, they play the games I suggest, and I like to let them win. I share my toys with them—My heavenly joys, and they light up when they see I am back.

What if I had whispered to them that I was actually a prince and would be back to get them and take them in My golden and crystal carriage to the castle on yonder hill? If I told them to tell the others about Me and that whoever wanted to come could—they just needed to be willing to leave the party, and trust what I said was true. If the beggarly, humble and despised girl in the corner started to tell the other proud and fancy, into themselves girls, they might have had various reactions.

“Who? That ragged boy who was talking to you? Boy! do you have a grand imagination.”

“Even he couldn’t manage being around you—that’s why he actually left.”

“Why would he want to be around you? There’s not a thread of beauty in your appearance.”

She would be mocked and laughed at, pushed away from their groups of shallow chatter and such. But there might be some, someone who was tired of all the fake cover ups for the way they were really feeling inside, and wished for something real—and to get it she was willing to believe in a supposed fantasy. Perhaps this other girl or two went then to sit with the low-class, ragged girl, who now had diamonds for eyes it seems, as they were glowing with a light of hope and a light of love for the ‘Prince’ that she called him. Instead of mingling with those who rejected the message that was passed on, and having no one else to tell, they looked out the window for any signs of His coming. They didn’t want to miss it.

Sure enough, he showed up, and the humble ones who believed, ran to the door—and were transformed as they walked through, to now be wearing gorgeous clothing, and they were shining all around, clean and looking like ethereal princesses. Those in the party were laughing in their fake display of merriment, and were too drunk to make the move, anyway, to get to the carriage. Even if they tried, walking through the door way wouldn’t have transformed them.—And only transformed persons would be allowed entrance into the carriage that took them to the castle. Their laughing stopped instantly as a look of terror hit them. They had missed the truth and now the trip. Everything they’d actually wanted was missed because they believed they were good enough, and didn’t need anyone humble telling them anything new.

As the believing and humbles ones ran out to meet the prince, he stood there now looking radiant and very royal, with his arms out ready to receive them. He embraced them and ushered them quickly in. He looked upward and saw the clouds of storms about to fall. The wave of the ocean was swelling to wash over the land, and a rumble of an earthquake was felt under their feet, beginning to escalate. Inside the carriage the lovely believers went, and off they were whisked away through the air, until they went farther and farther, hardly able to be seen as it went towards the castle in the clouds.

Meanwhile back in the party room, drinks and cups were flying, people were losing their footing as the earthquake hit full force. Chandeliers were falling, and pictures were tilting and then falling off the wall. Broken glass was on the floor, and people were trying to crawl out. But when they got to the door they screamed, as coming towards them was a title wave; a flood. Lighting was flashing and deep darkness was falling. If they only had listened. If they had only forsaken their pride, even for an instant, to hear what the

humble lady had to say, and believed they needed something or someone more than themselves to make all their best dreams possible.

I dwell with the humble and believing ones.

I would have loved to tell you stories—like the one above—to ease the pain of things you experienced in your childhood. I still can you know? There are things that you remember, that bother you. Maybe you need to have some “Story time with Jesus” and cuddle up with Me. I’ll tell you things that will make you feel better—and will teach you things too. Would you like that? And then you can share them with others, when appropriate. Okay?

Call it “Story time with the Master”. Whenever you have a hurt from your past, see if I have a story that will take your feelings away from the hurt, and into the joy of the glories that I have for you.

These are special stories with special meanings, stories that heal and help. They aren’t true stories, but are for the purpose of feeling good. There is much healing that is needed in the world. Start with your own heart, and “Be Healed” I say. For My Word heals.

A Carpenter’s Hands

There once was a carpenter who admired his tools. They could make things that his own hands couldn’t fashion on their own. These tools were hard and strong, or small, or long, or rough, or sharp, or whatever they needed to be. “Why can’t I be more like them? Why do I have to have hands that get hurt, that bleed, that get blisters, that get calluses while trying to do tough jobs? Couldn’t I do more if I was made of tougher stuff?” the carpenter wondered.

A little girl then burst into the workshop. She came and wrapped her arms around the carpenter’s leg—he was too tall for her to hug him all the way.

“Daddy, daddy,” she called out. He then leaned over and picked up his little girl and gave her a big hug. She was glad to see up so high. She was pointing out this and that in his tool shed, and pointing out the window.

Then she squirmed to be put down. She thought she wanted the freedom to run over and touch all the things she was looking at. Before the daddy could stop her, she had touched something sharp, and cried out. She had gotten cut. “Come back over to daddy,” he said gently to the girl.

The carpenter helped wash the cut on her finger and wrapped a little clean piece of cloth on it, and gave it a kiss. “Those things are dangerous to play with,” he said.

Daddy wiped the tears that were running down her cheeks with his soft thumbs, and then placed her hands in his. He placed one of his hands underneath both of hers, and the other like a soft blanket over her small hands, making them feel snug and warm.

“Daddy’s hands soft. Not hurt me,” she said.

The carpenter thought about that, then replied, “Yes, Daddy’s hands are soft. I’m glad they are. Sometimes the hard tools hurt me too.” He showed the girl a cut that was also healing on his finger, then continued, “But I’m glad my hands are not like the tools—hard and tough and rough. Then I can comfort others that get hurt. I can use the tough tools to make nice things, but I can have soft hands and help you feel all better.”

The little girl smiled and curled up onto His shoulder while he sang a song and they walked out of the shed. He placed her on the wooden seat swing that he had built for her, and gave her a push on it. They laughed and sang together. They were made just right to be able to help each other in the best ways.

The Friendly Little Bird

A little bird sat on a window sill, waiting for the daily crumbs that were put out. But on this day the window remained shut. The little hungry bird, after waiting for what seemed a very long time, at last hopped to the ground to begin looking for food. Perhaps something had dropped down from the day before, and he could eat it today.

Ah, there was a little tiny crumb, but beside it was something far better! A bug to eat, and oh! Over there was a bush with berries that were just starting to come out. Umm! So much goodness was discovered, even more than the bird would have gotten if it had just been fed at the window with a few crumbs that had been collected off the table.

Sometimes something we are hoping for, and even depending on, doesn't work out in the way we want it to. This makes us have to look around and find something else. Through doing some looking-and-finding, we discover more and better possibilities that would have been missed if our focus was only on that one thing we thought we needed to be happy and make it through our day.

Now the little bird had more options. The next day when the window was open, and the crumbs were there, the friendly bird saw the little girl sitting up in her bed. She tweeted to the bird, glad to see that it still came back again. And glad also that just because there were more berries and bugs around, it didn't stop coming to eat the few humble crumbs that were put out. It cheered her up to see this friendly little bird, and to hear the happy melody it sang.

At first the bird had needed the girl to provide for it, and now the little bird realised the girl needed its song of cheer and daily visits. So even though there were more luscious places to feed, the friendly bird made sure to return each day to give back, in gratitude, a song of cheer and nibble the humble gift that the girl could share.

One day the friendly little bird even brought a small twig with a ripe berry on it and placed it on the window sill. It sang a song and then flew off. The girl knew it was a gift from the friendly bird to her. The next day she placed on the window a few seeds she had saved from her meal the night before, as a little thank you to the little bird for his friendship and gifts. There is a time to give, and a time to receive. A time to love, and a time to be loved. A time to leave, and a time to return. A time to share, and a time to be shared with.

Near the Water's Edge

A little boy sat at the water's edge and tossed in a few rocks. He was thinking about some things lately. This seemed to help him pass the time while his mind was troubled. Just like the pebbles that he tossed in that vanished from sight, so were some other things in his life now gone. Or at least he couldn't see them anymore.

He tossed in another rock and then got up to walk away. It was time to go. Just then a bird in the tree began to sing a new little song. He stopped to listen. There was something special about this song. As he listened it seemed new thoughts were forming in his mind. It was a song that began waking up something that had

been slumbering deep inside him—joy. Joy was awakened, as a child awakes in the morning. The bird’s joy fluttered on the air of that song and made its way into the boy’s heart.

Then something else followed too, as he started walking down the path with his family—peace. He no longer wished to figure out all the questions that were bothering him, but just wanted to relax in the knowledge that the God who made the sparrow, would also bring a new song to his own heart. This bird’s own little ones had grown and flown away from their nest to start new lives. It was probable that this bird rarely saw those young ones again, but still it sang as it did every day, for each new day could bring new joys if it looked.

So the boy with now more of a hint of a smile on his face started to sing a song of cheer, and by the time the song was through, new hope had stirred his soul. Though lost things might remain out of sight, still there was much he could enjoy, and didn’t want to miss it. Each time he again started to miss what was no longer part of his life, he remembered the cheerful bird, singing near the water’s edge, and he too stirred himself to sing again until joy, peace and hope sprang up and kissed him.

Colourful Shiny Pebbles

A girl was looking through some colourful and varied types of pebbles on a rocky shore. She was selecting the ones she most liked. They were shiny and very attractive. But when she placed them in her pocket they eventually became dry. They looked different, and rather dull now.

A look of dismay came to her face when she later pulled the pebbles out to gaze at them and admire these special treasures. “They used to be wet, and that made their appearance all the more lovely,” someone told her. So, wanting them to look as lovely again as they did when she first held them, she placed them in a little bowl and covered them with water. When she would pull them out to look at them, they indeed still had that special, lovely shine. She made sure keep them wet if she wanted them to look their best.

Later on that day the girl was found crying, for someone had said something unkind and had hurt her tender heart. Holding her in her motherly arms, the mother assured her that all was not lost, and that good could come even from the harshest situation. She explained that just like the rocks were smoothed into round soft pebbles, and were shiniest when wet, so can hard times and tears bring out the best in our lives too.

Perhaps she once used to be unkind in speech to others, but through the tears of hurt feelings, she too—like the stones—had become rounder and smoother, and could shine with kindness on others; for she now understood the feelings. If she smiled, though wet with tears, she would shine like a rainbow—or a colourful pebble in the sunlight in a stream.

The girl felt much encouraged and went to look again at her special stones. She then went out to the garden where some other little rocks were found in the dirt. These ones were all brown, and rough in shape. She compared these ones to her clean, colourful and shiny stones. One type had been in much water, rubbed on and rubbed on, and were changed; the other stones had been left just as they were.

“I think I like the shiny, pretty stones best. And I want to be like them too—even if it takes times of tears and rubbing experiences to make me smooth and kind, and more pleasant.”

She gave her mother a hug, and went off to play—with the one who had caused her tears. She wouldn’t act roughly back, but encouraged them to also let the water of love wash away their own dirt of hurt, and smooth them out. And it worked! For the rest of the day gentle speech was heard.

We Still Have Each Other

A boy was having a picnic on the grass in the setting sun, while his mother was in the house nearby. He suddenly saw a bunny hop nearby, but then hopped quickly away.

“Why does the bunny always move so fast?” he wondered. It didn’t seem so friendly that way. The boy wouldn’t have minded if the bunny would have hopped right on over and up into his lap. He would have gladly shared a piece of lettuce with it.

He didn’t mind the thought of having a new friend—even a furry one that would be there only for a short while. He was feeling lonesome and missing someone especially.

The boy looked at the fading light in the sky and knew he’d have to face, once again, the empty bed opposite of his in his room; the bed that his dear brother used to sleep in. But he was gone, for how long he didn’t know. His father and brother had to travel to take care of legal business in another country and things were taking so very long to work out.

Then a funny thought came to mind. “Why don’t I just pretend that he is in his bed! Then I won’t feel so lonely. Perhaps I can even talk to the lump that represents him, while I go to sleep.”

With that humorous, somewhat crazy idea, he went into the house when his mother called him to come in.

Mother wondered why he was pulling some big jackets out of the closet, and rolling up some towels, but said nothing. When she came to say good night to her boy, she let out a little gasp! She thought for a moment that her other boy was there, just like he always had been before.

“Is that your brother, here for a little visit?” she asked. The boy, tucked in his bed nodded. He had a bit of a smile on his face. For some odd reason he didn’t feel as alone.

This made his mother realise how alone he felt, and how much he did miss his brother. It was mostly the uncertainty that was hard. The boy didn’t know when—or sometimes if—his brother and father would be back.

Mother played along—for she also missed her other son, as well as her husband, too. After giving a goodnight kiss to her boy, she went over and patted the “lump in the bed” and said, “I hope you too, have a good sleep. I miss you.” Though it looked like she was talking to the jacket-and-towel boy, in her heart she really was wishing her other boy, far away, would know that she did love and miss him.

Mother remembered that she had some recordings of the boys when they were younger. So she brought in the audio player and let her boy listen to it while he went to sleep. It brought them some smiles and laughs. She decided to sit on the chair beside her boy, until he was asleep. She knew he needed company, and she needed time to think.

In the morning, the mother gave her son a big hug and said, “I’m glad I have you still! Whatever would I do if you weren’t here!” Then she told him about an idea that came to her the night before.

They planned to do some extra special things together that day—and each day—just to enjoy the one they were with then: each other! Even if they still missed others that they loved. When they had a special dinner by candle light that night, listening to beautiful music and eating some of the boy’s favourite foods, they both felt happier. It wasn’t because of the food, nor because their loved ones were back that day, but because they chose to focus instead on appreciating each other, and enjoying the companionship of who they still had.

He Helps the Hurts to Heal

Miow was a boy who often had to help plant the rice in his family's rice paddies. He always did like a bowl of steaming hot rice, so his work would gain him personal benefits. But there was something wrong, and it troubled Miow. His aching feet. Would they ever feel normal?

It wasn't something his mama could fix, nor his papa, nor anything he could do about it. However, one day as he sat under a tree for shade, eating a picnic lunch he realised something. Something came to mind that he never thought of before.

"Why don't I ask Grandma what she used to do?" His great-grandmother was, in her younger years, a good rice farmer. She was much too old for that type of work now, but she might have some good advice. So Miow went to the little room where she lay most of the day, doing what, he didn't quite know. He was too active to imagine what could be done in bed for so long. However, he found that she enjoyed his company and liked talking with him, and he with her.

Great grandmother smiled to see her great-grandson. A rare treat it was, and welcome. On his way to see her he had thought to pick a few wild flowers to give to her. She smiled at him and thanked him for the little gift.

When Miow got to talking, he found it hard to speak, as it made him cry a bit to tell of his pains and the troubles he faced in life. Hurting feet wasn't the only thing that was hard. Great-grandma listened and asked a few questions. She had him place his feet up beside her on the bed while she helped to rub some of the painful muscles. It seemed as he talked about the things that were troubling not only his body, but his mind and heart, that he began to feel better.

What he didn't know was that as his great-grandmother was touching his feet she was doing more than trying to rub away the strain and aches. She was praying for the God who made little boys, rice, and life, would heal whatever wasn't right. She also prayed not only that his feet would feel well, but that he would follow in the good way of life, and lead people to doing the right things.

When they were done talking, Miow felt so much better. He decided to come back every day to talk. Grandma was glad for this. It gave her something to look forward to, and it was making a child happier and healthier.

Through their times of talking, Miow learned many things he didn't know about; things that weren't taught him in school or by those in the village. He learned the way to live a happy life, and how to find the way to God's house in Heaven. He learned to pray and to wait to listen to what God's Son Jesus had to say.

He was all well now, after these times with his Grandma. She had taught him so many things, and he had learned to pray, and most of all learned to speak with God's Son who also knew what it was like to be hurting and sad.

Miow learned that one day all the troubles of the poor and sick will be gone, when Jesus returns to the Earth to be the King over it all. He will take away all sickness and let everyone have all the food that they need. He will teach the proud and selfish ones how to share and be humble by having to do some of the hard tasks that they never wanted to help with before.

The children would be able to run and play freely then, and could help their parents too, but they wouldn't have to work so hard then, like they did now, just to get enough food to eat. He learned that it was good sometimes to have troubles, because it makes us search for better things. And when we find the best answers and solutions, then we are wiser than before, and we can help others. Just like Great-grandma was

doing to help him. She was wise now, and could be a help to him who could be a help to others by sharing what he learned.

He learned that some problems can only be fixed when God is talked to about them.

So if you are having pain that no one is able to cure, talk to Jesus, God's Son, and let Him bring the cure for whatever is ailing you. Be brave, because some things take time to learn, and sometimes going through hard times makes you stronger. And you need to be strong to do many things in life. Be happy that you have life, even if it's difficult. You only have a short time to live on Earth, so learn all you can while you have the chance. When the time is right, Jesus will change everything and make it all right again.

I love you.

The Disguised Prince

A kind prince over a vast land, decided to go out in secret to survey the condition of the land and its people. He was to dress like the humblest peasant, and travel from one end to the other. If the country was a good one, then a poor man should be able to have all that he needed on such a journey.

It wasn't that all the land was poor, as most had all that they needed, and many had a bit too much. However, not all citizens behaved as they should, nor shared what they had.

The night his mission started he sat on a cushion by the fire, while his father the king sat on a large and soft chair. As he looked into the fire, he knew it was the last time that he would enjoy this kind of luxury for some time: being warm and comfortable, enduring no hunger, and having the one that cared the most about his well-being, nearby.

"Thank you, my son, for doing this task. It will help you greatly when you one day get full charge of this land. It will give you compassion, as you will know what it feels like. Also, it will give you insight into who needs to learn better how to live. And I will give you my full permission to later punish any and all who don't act in the way that a citizen of our nation should behave, and to reward richly those who deserve it. We have made many declarations and proclamations, announcements and speeches, and sent out messengers repeatedly to tell and post up lists of guidelines explaining how proper citizens should behave; the way that makes us pleased; the way we will reward.

"Go now and see the state of our land, and prod those you can, telling them the ways of their king. I will miss you, but it will make things so much better later on. You won't regret doing this difficult task. It might even be fun at times, as people will respond to you in just the normal way that they do to other fellow citizens. You'll feel just what it's like to be one of the common folk. And when you get back, we'll have a great celebration, and you can tell us all about it. I'm sure it will be hard for me to hear of some of the things you encounter, but it will only help us to help these people learn things better. I don't want you to have to suffer, as I know you most likely will. But I know you are brave, and you are the best one for this job."

The prince got up and embraced his father the king, ate his last delicious snack, and then changed his attire into something completely different. Only a father could recognise him now. With a final farewell, he was then taken by loyal and trustworthy servants to a distant part of the land. The servants bid him well, and loathing to leave him, the royal prince, in such a place, they knew they needed to, or else their presence would give him away. So in the dark they quickly and quietly left, while the prince-turned-pauper curled up to sleep on a pile of hay under an oak on the edge of the forest.

In the morning, his journey began.

For three and a half months he made his way along the roads, visited towns, slept out in the open, or at times in some kind person's house. He told people he was going to meet his father who lived in the north. Some helped him, others wanted him to stay and work on their farm to help themselves earn a better living. Others mocked his father saying he mustn't be a very good one to leave him in this state. The children loved the stories he would tell, as he had a way of attracting the eager little ones who liked what this man said. He was kind to animals, and didn't ever let anyone hurt someone else while he was around.

There were a few people who thought they recognised him as being of the royalty, but they couldn't be sure.

Those months were hard times, and gave him a very clear picture of what the condition of the land was like. He had some long talks with different men and women, and encouraged them to communicate with those in the royal house about their needs. He said he was sure that the king loved them all and would like to hear from them.

At last the time came that his journey of discovery was over. It was a time of joy and a time of sorrow too. He would miss the friends he made, but he had missed his beloved father even more. He could see his friends again, and would treat them with the best rewards for caring for him when they thought he was a poor and beggarly man. And for those that pushed him, hurt him, mocked him, well, he would give them the best they needed too—a bit of correction. He didn't just want them to be sorry that they treated the royal prince in this way, but hoped they would learn from it that it hurts the king when they treat anyone in the land in this way. They were all like his children and family.

Yes, that's exactly how the king wished the country would be—like a family that cares for each other.

After a hearty hug and warm welcome, and tears of rejoicing, father and son sat down once again, beside the warming fire to talk about his expedition. It had seemed so long at the time, yet now, oddly it seemed it had only been a short while. Now they were again together.

“So, tell me about our citizens... Do they have love, do they really care about each other? Do they know what I really am like? Or do they have misconceptions about us, the royal ruling family?”

On and on they talked, discussed, and made future plans. They talked all night and didn't feel the least bit tired.

In the morning the prince saw that all the palace had been decorated in extra splendour, and a feast that would last all day was spread. It would be a joyous time.

Towards the end of the last meal of the day, the prince sat pensively.

His father, the king, knew what he was thinking.

Even in all this splendour, with luxuries all around, and everything this heart could desire made available for him, there was something else he now longed for. It was something even the king himself wished for. It was part of the reason for sending the prince on that mission—something that would change things forever.

Now that he had grown close to his friends in the land, and they loved him for the person he was—not in a show of respect just because it was the prince—but for him just as they knew him, there was the need in the heart of the prince to get to see his friends again. Perhaps those who had treated him the best—like the kind and humble people, and the children—would get to come to the palace.

The next big feast that would be planned, the prince and king wanted those special ones to be invited to.

Even the fact that some of the unkind and hurtful people were not invited, would be a lesson to them. It would be a shock to them to know that it was the prince himself that they had mistreated. It would be a

hard lesson to miss out on all this joy and fun. But perhaps it would make them wish to change, and later they could get a new chance to be reward in some way.--Both the king and prince hoped it would be so.

As the servants, who also ate at the feast table, stood at the end of the meal to clear away the dishes, the king and prince talked about this coming festival where they would invite certain chosen of the land to attend. They decided that this time the prince would go out again, but this time in royal apparel and with his servants, and call each one of the selected guests to come. He knew the whole country would be excited and stirred by this event. And best of all, he knew that things in the land would get so much better from that time on.

With a well-made plan, the two left the table, to carry on with their responsibilities.

Meanwhile, something else had been stirring in the countryside. Though not everyone of the land had met this pauper-prince, those who had met him decided they needed to do something about what he taught them, as poor as he looked. In their heart grew a desire to help others, and to tell others about the poor man that taught how it was best to show love and help each other. The kind folks, who were also the friends of the disguised prince, began in new ways to help any others who were in need, and began to teach others what they had heard this visiting pauper-prince tell them. They also made sure to listen extra carefully to whatever announcements and proclamations were made in the country, sent by the King. They realised things would be better for everyone if they listened and obeyed.

Not everyone was in favour of the King's efforts to improve things. They had other ideas of how things should be run. They didn't like the King's approach to problems, mostly because they didn't listen to all the things he had said before. They thought they knew better, anyway, on their own. They already knew they didn't like the king's way of doing things, so they didn't bother to read any of the messages posted around—or if they did, it was simply to mock the message and speak against it.

Little did they know, but their names and every detail of their lives were being written down by those the king had asked to secretly keep track of all that was going on. He wanted to be very fair to each one in his land, and no one to ever be unjustly punished, or to ever miss out on a reward they earned and deserved. That is why a record was kept about all that was said and done. These reports would be collected sometime in the future when big changes would come in the land, and rewards and punishments were to be given out. The king's very loyal, secret messengers were doing this job.

At long last the grand day came, and the prince donned his most royal attire. He sat in a golden carriage, with a music band playing instruments including trumpets, walked alongside. It was the day of summoning.

Before this time, announcements had been made that the prince was coming to get some selected special guests for a marvellous festival and delicious feast. It had been made clear just who was going to be eligible to attend the finest banquet ever. Now the time had come.

Some had donned on their best robes and were gathering the children to be ready. They knew the time was very near. Others, who never read any of the announcements anyway, were still sitting in filth, drinking things that made them even less aware of what was going on. Others saw those getting ready and asked about it. They couldn't read, and so had to be told and taught what the king had said. Some that were taught, just laughed and carried on in their foolishness, while others tried to poke fun at those preparing and telling others—they said it was just a joke; the prince would never come.

However, some really listened and believed. "Is it too late for me to be a part of it?" It almost was, but thankfully many heard about it before it was too late to make the needed changes and preparations. So, just in time some of the kind hearted citizens began to change their ways and believe the news that was spreading about the pauper-prince, and how they were to treat others well. And if they did as the king

asked, and did their best to make the country filled with love and kindness, they too would be invited by the prince when he visited real soon.

It all seemed to happen so quickly. Like a flash, from one moment to the next, the prince was there. And before they could blink an eye, so fast were the chosen people taken away to a feast so grand they could never have imagined how great it was.

“I love you!” one little girl said as she wrapped her arms around the prince as soon as she was helped up into the carriage. This made the prince so happy. She wasn’t looking at the gold and shiny things, or even just looking forward to the festival and delicious feast. She was the happiest girl in the world, she thought, because she got to see the prince and sit by him. To her, he was the best person she ever met.

And all the way to the palace he told her and the other children around in the carriage, the best stories of all. He told how they too would be princes and princesses one day, and would sit on thrones. Their little eyes widened in awe. They would have to learn from the prince himself just how to be. They would listen well, and watch his every move. This would make them be the best rulers the land ever had. The prince knew things would get better then, especially with all this help from those young ones that loved him and the king, and wanted to do things their way, the right way, the love way.

Allan’s Song

Once there was a boy, his name was Allan. He loved to bike out to the hills with his big brother and enjoy God’s beautiful creation. He loved to listen to the song birds whistle their merry tunes. He enjoyed watching the beautiful trees raise their leafy arms up and sway in the breeze. Allan felt like all the animals in the wood, and each plant, tree and flower, loved their Creator, and loved to praise Him all day long. –That’s why he liked to be out in nature, because He loved to be surrounded by praises to Jesus.

When Allan took time to stop and listen, he’d hear many interesting noises, some of them were pecking noises of birds looking for bugs in the trees. He heard the squeaky noises that the squirrels made when scampering in the trees. He’d sometimes hear the leaves crumpling as little wild creatures looked for food or nuts on the ground. Allan loved most of all to hear the sound of the wind as it rustled through the leaves of the trees. It sounded like music to him.

One day as he was walking along the path, Allan was thinking, “It’s so beautiful here, I know Jesus must really like it here too. I wonder what Jesus would say if He were walking beside us now. I wonder what His voice would sound like.”

Well, Allan didn’t hear a voice out loud, like the normal kind you hear, but suddenly, as he was thinking this, He knew Jesus was really there, and wanted to talk to him. He told his brother he wanted to stop for a few minutes under a tree to listen to Jesus. Allan sat down and looked up at all the pretty shades of green that the sunlight made as it shone through the leaves above him.

“Hi Allan!” He heard Jesus say, deep in his heart. “I do like these beautiful trees, because they remind Me of how you are when you lift your arms up to praise Me. When I look at a beautiful flower, that faces towards the sun, with its bright, gorgeous colours, I think of how happy you make Me when you choose to think happy thoughts and praise Me, instead of sulking or being sad. You are like these beautiful things to Me, and that’s why I like it here too.”

Allan smiled, he liked being thought of as a fine lovely tree that reached way up high. He wondered how he could be more praiseful, so Jesus would think of him as one of the tallest, most beautiful pines of the woods.

As he walked along he remembered some of the times he had been rather grumpy--like when his brother had taken his bike, when he wanted to ride it. Allan thought of a way to stay cheerful the next time something didn't work out just the way he wanted it. He wanted his arms of praise to reach up high, even when things didn't always go so well.

The next morning at the breakfast table Allan was enjoying his toast with eggs. "Mommy, would I be able to have some honey on my toast, please?" He asked.

"I'm sorry, Allan, but we don't have any more today. We used it all up. Would you like some peanut butter instead?" Mommy offered.

Allan's face started to display a frown. He really liked honey on his toast, but today he'd have to miss it. Just then Allan remembered what he had decided to do when something didn't work out right. Even though he was a bit disappointed, he wanted to show Jesus his love and appreciation anyway. He stopped thinking about the honey, and instead chose to count out 5 other things that he was glad for.

In his heart Allan said, "Thank You Jesus that I have a sweet mommy who loves me and prepares my breakfast every morning. Thank You also that we have food to eat—and good healthy food too. Thank you Jesus that I can come and eat here with my family, and we can be together, and that I'm not sick. And thank you most of all that I can live for You today. Please bless all those children in the world who don't have good food, or friends or a loving place to live. Help them to find You and come to know Your love."

When he finished this praise prayer, he felt much happier inside, and he knew that Jesus was smiling too.

The next day a kind man phoned Allan's Home, and said that because he wanted to make the children happy he wanted to give them some honey. Allan was so happy when he heard this that he jumped all around the room, thanking the Lord with a special song he just made up then.

"Oh, Jesus is so good to me,
He gives me such sweet honey.
I love to praise Him all the time,
At home, and in the mountains I climb."

He learned something special: that Jesus really loves praise! Allan knew Jesus gave that fun reward to let him know how happy it makes Him when we praise Him—always!

Ella's Perfume

Ella was a sweet girl, who had pretty, long hair, that looked the colour of daffodils, when the sun shone on it. She was a happy girl. Her favorite thing to do after dinner each night was curl up in her cozy place with her little Bible story book. She loved reading the stories about the boys and girls who had done special jobs for the Lord, and the miracles that Jesus did.

There were so many stories that were her favorite ones, but the best one to her was when Mary visited when Jesus having dinner with Simon, and she wanted to show so much love and thankfulness to Him that she poured sweet smelling oil, special perfume, on Jesus' feet, and kissed them, washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair. Mary only wanted to make Jesus happy, and Ella could see how very much Jesus loved Mary.

“I wish I could have been Mary,” Ella thought, while looking at the picture of how happy Jesus was, with Mary there. “I’d sure like to make Jesus glad like that. I wonder what I can do. I can’t even see Jesus now, but I’d like Him to know how I love him so, so much.”

“Time for bed,” Ella’s Mommy called out. “I’ll read you one last story, while you tuck yourself under your covers.” When Ella was all ready and snuggled with her little white teddy, Mommy read to her. After the story, Mommy prayed for her and kissed her goodnight. Ella was tired and started to fall asleep quickly. That night Ella had a special dream.

“Oh, Jesus, I can see you! Can I sit on Your lap?” she said. In her dream she was in Heaven, and Jesus was talking to a small group of children that were huddling around Him. Ella wanted to be the closest that she could be. If Jesus told any stories she wanted to be sure to hear them very well. She loved His stories.

“Of course,” Jesus said, as He lifted her up to sit on His knee. Jesus’ story began.

“I once was a little boy, you know?” Jesus said with a smile. “Just like you,” He said as He pointed to a little boy sitting on a rock listening carefully. “I liked to run, and play around, and I also did many little jobs for My mommy and daddy, and helped to care for my younger brothers and sisters as well. When My mommy had the first baby, after me, I learned to go and get things for her, while she was resting. I’d do little jobs, cause I was still a very little boy. But I liked to do these things, because it made me feel like I was growing up, and that mommy and daddy needed me to help them.

“One day, when I was a bit bigger I really wanted to do something—something that was a bit too hard for Me, because I wasn’t big enough yet. Has that ever happened to you? It takes time to grow up, doesn’t it? --Even here in Heaven. There’s just so much to learn and do.

“Well, that one day I started to cry a bit, because I felt I wasn’t as big as the others, and I so much wanted to grow up big and tall and to be just like My daddy, and the other big boys. Then I heard My Heavenly Father speak to Me. His gentle and loving voice whispered in My heart.

“‘Jesus,’ He said, ‘One day, when you are a grown young man you’ll have lots and lots of jobs to do. Sometimes you’ll be very tired and it will even be hard for you to work, but I will give you the strength to do it. So enjoy this time when you are still very young and are growing up. Don’t let yourself get too impatient, because you’ll miss some very special things. You’ll miss having the fun times I want you to have if you are always wishing you were a different size or shape, or that you could do different things than you are able to right now. Be happy for the way you are, and you’ll have more fun that way.’ My Heavenly Father said.

“That helped Me to want to be happy for just the way I was, and to have fun even if I didn’t get to do all the things I wanted to do, right then. As I got older I understood this better, and saw the wisdom of My Father. He only gave Me what was best, and what He knew I could do.”

Then Jesus looked at Ella, and with a twinkle in His eyes said, “And I have something special for you!—For each of you children.”

“Ooh, what is it?!” Ella said with excitement.

Then Jesus pulled out a small package, with a gold coloured wrapping.

“In here is something for each of you to put on.”

“Is it clothes?” Ella thought. But the package was too small for clothes to fit in it for all the children sitting there.

“It’s a special bottle of sweet smelling ointment,” Jesus said. “It’s like the kind that Mary anointed My feet with when I was eating dinner with Simon.”

Ella’s eyes lit up. “Could I smell some?” she asked.

“Yes,” Jesus said, as He unwrapped the beautiful bottle of sweet perfume.

“Hold out your hands,” He told the children. When they did, Jesus poured a few drops into each one’s hands.

The children smelt it and rubbed it on their neck and faces.

“Oooh, this is just lovely!” Ella exclaimed. “I really like it! May I have a few more drops please? I’d like to smell good like this all over, and put some all over my body.”

“Sure, there’s plenty to go around,” Jesus said as He gave a bit more to each one who held out their hands again.

“Jesus, I really wanted to be the one to pour sweet perfume on You, just like Mary did. But I wasn’t there, because I wasn’t living on earth yet. I really want to make You happy just like she did,” Ella told Jesus, with tears in her eyes.

“My dear Ella, just like I put this perfume on you, and you smelt how nice it was, you can make Me happy with the sweet smells of your praise words to Me. You don’t have to see Me in order to lift up your arms, and tell Me that you’re happy for something I did for you. You can praise Me any time—and that will make Me so happy! It will be like pouring sweet perfume all over Me. It will smell so good. When you take the time to stop and give Me a few words of praise, and tell Me that you love Me that makes Me smile--just as big as I did when Mary showed Me her great love and thankfulness.

“When you wake up from this dream, dear Ella, you can remember how close I am to you. And don’t forget how lovely your praises are to Me—just like beautiful smelling oil. I love to hear them! Thank you for being My little girl, and loving Me so much.”

When Ella woke up from that wonderful dream, she did just that—she took a few minutes before she even sat up to speak to her dear sweet Jesus, and tell Him, “Thank you, dear Jesus for that wonderful sleep. And thank You for being so close to Me. I know now that when I talk to You, You hear Me. And I’m so glad that I can make you happy, just like Mary did. I want to praise You all day long for all the wonderful things You do for me. I love you so, so much!”

And Jesus did smile when He heard Ella’s prayer of praise—a very big smile was on His face—and Ella had a very happy day. She made Jesus happy with her praise words, and Jesus helped everything to go so well, and even provided some special little treats for her that day.

Ella put on the perfume of praise, with the words she said, and poured it up into Jesus’ hands, and He smelt it. Umm, it made Him so happy, because his dear little Ella praised Him and loved Him so, so, much.

Do you wear the sweet perfume of praise every day too? It will make both you and Jesus so very happy! Try it!

A Bit of Both

“Hush little baby, now, it’s going to be okay. Mama’s right here,” said the tired woman to her sick little child. She had gone out of the room for but a moment to get a glass of water, and the baby had woken again, just moments after being put to sleep.

Sickness was always a challenging time—both for parents, and children.

Patiently she picked up her little tender one and rocked gently back and forth. Soon the little one was asleep again. She slowly lowered herself into the rocking chair. This time she would hold him, and hold him, for as long as it took for the little one to have a nice long sleep.

Because of the nature of his illness, when he was lying down it obstructed his breathing passage somewhat, and that is what woke him. But some how being held snugly and gently rocked, he could sleep so much longer.

It was worth the time it took to treat this young one with extra care. The more loving care, and the greater the effort put forth, the sooner the little one would be better.

She gave her own strength and time to this one, remembering that someone had done the same for her one day long ago. It was the time for her to pass on that love. There is a time to receive and a time to give. And we are happier when our life has a bit of both.

Soon the happy smiles of the healed little one would cheer her and be a reward for her time of giving. No one gives without getting back in return, eventually. And each time we receive, we can look for a chance to give again to another. That is the happy way.

The Pin

A little girl dropped a pin. She was in the middle of sewing.

“Oh, dear! Where did it go? If I don’t find it, I may step on it. All because of my mistake, now I may get hurt, or cause someone else to get hurt.”

It was really troubling her to think about it. She wished she always did everything right, especially when doing things wrong, or mistakenly, caused her a lot of trouble.

Why can’t I just be perfect? She wondered.

Just then her mother came in to see how things were going. She was making some doll clothes for a friend who had recently lost a loved one to an illness. She wanted to cheer up her friend with this gift. It was taking more time and effort than she thought it would, but it was fun at the same time.

“Do you need any help?” her mother asked.

“I just can’t find the pin that fell somewhere around here. I’m really worried that my younger brother or I might get hurt,” the girl explained.

“Let’s sit down and pray. I’m sure the one who made us, can help us find it. He can fix things before they get to be bigger problems, if we’ll just ask Him.” At mother’s suggestion the girl did just that.

“Dear Lord, I’m trying to make something nice, but I just keep making silly mistakes. Please help me to find where the pin has fallen, and also to make these clothes for my friend’s doll to wear. I can’t do big things

that help many millions of people, but if you Lord can help me at least do a little job to make even one person know they are cared for, then I'm happy. But I need Your help, obviously."

As soon as she opened her eyes after praying, right then the pin seemed to appear, or was at least easily visible to the girl. With a big smile she picked it up and showed her mother.

Mother was pleased. It made her happy that her daughter had learned the importance of working together with Jesus when doing a job to show His love to others. The goal wasn't to never make mistakes, but to pray more often and listen to what Jesus had to say. Every mistake could make things better, if she—and everyone else—used them to stop and pray and listen to the Lord.

Mother then helped her daughter to cut out the next piece of cloth that would be used in the sewing project, and helped to thread the needle for her too. This made things go faster, and it was like no time was lost at all, because she got extra help.

A few days later it was her friend's birthday. She hadn't planned to have it ready to give her on her birthday, but that is just when it happened to be ready. That way it was even more fun for her friend.

"What if I never made any of the mistakes...?" the girl pondered. "It may have been ready a lot sooner, but I wonder if it would have been as fun? I think it all worked out; all of it. I learned so much, and the timing was just perfect."

Her friend hugged and thanked her, and said with a big smile, "How did you know I wanted this? I just prayed yesterday for new clothes for my dolly? My prayer got answered so soon!"

Now it was the girl's turn to be surprised. She hadn't known. But the Someone who knows all things did, and planned it all in advance—even giving the maker of the gift time to learn some lessons, make some mistakes, and still have it all ready at just the right time; in time for the prayer to be answered when it was needed.

The girls went off to play with their dolls, and plan another deed of kindness to do for someone else, somewhere else—all in secret. They knew the Lord would show them just what, and when and how to do it. It would all work out perfectly well when they choose to show love and work in teamwork with the most Loving One who told them to "love one another."

A Bunny

"Come little bunny, bunny. Come..." the boy was trying to befriend the wild bunny rabbit that had taken up residence in his backyard.

But no matter how the boy talked, or what treats he tried to offer, the bunny preferred to keep its distance.

"I think he likes to stay in his own little world," said mother, to the boy.

"I just wish I could hold it. It looks so furry and nice. It would feel so snug in my arms."

He was imagining how great it would be to cuddle that cute and soft looking creature.

"Well, I think it sees things differently. If it was going to be as fun for it to be held by you, as you think it will be for you to hold it, there's no doubt it would just hop, hop, hop right over to you each evening for a snuggle time. But I think it just feels different.

The mother tried to explain.

“Humans have the need to be held by arms in a hug, by other humans. Creatures have the need to be loved and cared for by those of their type. But to be held in a person’s arms would feel, to many animals, like they lost their freedom. They might wonder if they would be allowed to ever hop free again. What it does most is probably what it likes to do best—hop free, nibble, and hop again some more.

“Don’t you like to have the chance to do what you most enjoy? If instead of being allowed to play around at the playground, I just wanted you to sit beside me on the bench and keep me company, wouldn’t that be hard for you? Would that be very nice for you? I might like to rest and relax on the bench, because I’ve been walking around and staying active doing different things; and I love you and might wish for you to be with me. But part of love would be to enjoy watching you play, as I know that would make you happier—and it’s what you needed best too.

The boy was starting to understand. Sometimes showing love is to let a wish go unfulfilled, so that someone else—or something else—gets what they actually would rather.

Mother then handed her boy his life-sized, super soft, stuffed animal bunny. This one he could hold and cuddle any time. And the real one outside he would just watch and enjoy from a distance. He wouldn’t try to place it in a cage either. He would let the bunny have all the fun it wanted.

He decided it was a grown up way to be—to let others have what they wished for, and not try to take whatever he wanted. He would remember to think about the feelings of others—and of animals—before trying to satisfy a wish. Even if it was something that seemed so very nice, that surely the other person or animal would love it. People are different. And certainly animals are different than people. Everything alive has different needs, and the kind thing to do is to let each one have the best chance to receive what is best for them.

That night in his dreams, the boy was hopping and running with the bunny—it looked just like the one in his backyard. He was laughing and having a lot of fun. Some wishes, when they can’t be fulfilled in the day time, can sometimes happen in dreams. Everyone can be happier then, when they make the right and kind choices during the day.

Brick-Brack

The man was making brick-brack, weaving in his hands a splendid pattern. First he used this colour, and then another—an assortment of various threads were needed.

Now if you were to look at the back, you would see it wasn’t much of a pattern, but a mass of threads, and looked like a mess. However, on the right side it all made perfect sense.

This brick-brack was to be used in an outfit he was sewing for his son. It was to be part of the suspenders, the cross bar.

Patiently, one bit at a time, he wove, braided, went up and over, around, down through, and so forth.

When he was done, he smiled. For just like each thread was part of a bigger design, so was this item, once completed, part of a bigger design or plan. Now an outfit could be made, as he had all the needed pieces.

To make the outfit he would need to cut the cloth into the right pieces as he cut out the pattern. Then he could sew them all together to make the pants, then the shirt. He could also make a hat, a jacket, socks and shoes—if he had all right materials.

When his son was at last all dressed in his outfit, it fit just perfectly.

His father smiled. It had taken time to create each part that was needed to make it. Even caring for his sheep was part of it, as the wool for the pants and hat came from yarn made from the wool of his sheep. Much work and planning had gone into it, some starting a long time before the actual sewing and final production.

Yet, this completed clothing outfit was still just a part of another and bigger plan. It was one of many he was to make. His son was part of a team of performers—their family and some others who joined in. Each of them needed this outfit to wear.

Together this team would perform dances and songs on the stage of this village. They would look splendid. As long as the father kept in mind what he was working towards—the smiles on the faces of the audience they would see one day—it helped him reach his goal.

If he were to suddenly get so into making the brick-brack, for example, that he thought, “That’s what I am! I’m maker of brick-brack”, and just kept on with it, he couldn’t have reached his real goal. Or if in making the hats he thought, “I’ll just make hats now, I think. Perhaps I can sell them. And that’s what I’ll do in life” then the shoes wouldn’t have gotten made.

There was a time to focus and keep on going—like completing the making a roll of brick-brack, and there was a time to stop and change and move on to doing something else, so the bigger plan could come into being, once all the parts of the plan were ready.

And was the show their family and the team would put on the end of the plan? Or was it too, also, a piece of a yet bigger plan and goal? It too was just part of what this family was doing. One little step by one little step a goal could be reached, and once reached, it was another piece that worked to complete a yet greater plan.

The man couldn’t lose sight of his goal, or it would not get completed—either he would be discouraged with the small details and tedious tasks, or he would get side tracked and miss doing what he had actually set out to do.

The Box

“Come over here and look in this little fancy wooden box,” Jesus tells the little girl, dressed in pink with a bow in her hair.

Inside was a mirror, and music came out of the box when the lid was lifted. But other than that it was empty.

“What is it for?” she asks, with a question on her face.

He smiles and closes the lid, and hands it to her.

“Well, if you want to know what you look like, you look inside. The mirror shows back an image of you. And it’s something you can put special treasures in. Perhaps a pearl necklace that I might give to you, or a ring, or a pressed flower, or small bottle of perfume.”

She takes the gift box and sets it beside her bed, on the little table; already imagining just what might fill it one day.

Then she runs outside to play. But in doing so she gets rather soiled. She remembered that for the party later on she was meant to keep looking her best.

So she runs quickly to her bedside and opens her special box to peer into the mirror. But when she opens it expecting it to be empty, there is a lovely set of earrings, made of jewels.

“Oh!” she exclaims. “How did these get here?” She looks up to see Jesus standing at the door of her room, with a smile. He knows she is amazed. The twinkle in His eyes tell her that He put them there. She runs over to give Him a hug of thanks.

“See, when you have this little box, I have a place to put the special gifts I want to give you.”

This box is like time—your time spent with Me. The mirror is what My Word is like. It helps to show you what you need to see, so you can get all cleaned up and ready for the party that is coming very soon. And when you come to have time with Me, I can give you new treasures that will beautify you even more and make you glad. I have so many special things to give you, but you have to open your heart, like opening the empty box. And you have to look up to me—like looking into the mirror. Then you have to do something about it, whatever that look in the mirror reminded you to do.

And every time you open the box—your heart and eyes—to spend time with Me, there just might be a special jewel and gift I give to you; something that makes you more beautiful and enriches you. My jewels and gifts are the most valuable. And the gold coins, that represent faith, will likewise be placed there, each time to learn from My Word.

Batteries

The boy, clutching his little spending allowance, walked down the aisle of the local shop. His mama told him that he could select something he really enjoyed.

Making a choice was hard. Each thing had some aspect that would make it undesirable.

If he got his favourite piece of fruit or snack, then it would be gone within minutes, all eaten. Though fun for a moment, it wouldn't last.

If he chose some paper craft activities—pens, coloured pencils, paper and stickers, they too would wear out or get ruined in some way. Besides, they required creative work to use them. If he didn't have creative ideas or didn't take the time, they wouldn't get any use. He had to provide what was needed to make it fun.

If he selected a toy, well, most of the toys at the shop he already had at home anyway. There weren't too many choices. But a toy wasn't fun without a friend to enjoy it with, he thought. Playing alone just wasn't as fun. If he got the toy, who would make sure a friend would always be there for him when he wanted them? Besides, that, even though it was more fun to play together, still he'd have to learn to play nicely and share the toys. Only then would he get the most fulfilment. And toys had a way of breaking too, some of them. The kind that were the most unbreakable, like wooden blocks for example, he had already at home, or could make some with wood scraps, if he needed some more.

If he selected an item of clothing, well, it would only get used some of the time, and would only look nice for a while. It would get stained, ripped, wrinkled, faded—and if none of these things, he'd outgrow it one day anyway.

A set of batteries? Rechargeable batteries? Now that was a new thought. These, though they didn't look fun, flashy, and “do” much, nor delight his senses, they had power to help something else “do” what it was meant to do. These he could use in various of his electronic devices that were battery powered. It was the batteries' ability to help something else do what they were designed to that gave them value.

This was the item of his choice.

It cost him much more to get these than it would have to buy a little snack. The prices varied much in each of the things he had looked at. But these would be much longer lasting, if he took care of them well.

When they returned home, he showed others what he got. “What?” someone was surprised. This item didn’t look fun at all. It made no noise, it had no flashing lights, it wasn’t edible, it couldn’t be worn as a shirt or hat for a certain occasion, it couldn’t be played with. What could it do?

But the boy realised, when he looked at them, that they had the ability to help something else that was powerless, to do most of those things. He saw the potential in them, and needed something just like them.

The batteries could make his flashlight work—and thus, together with another item, they could shine.

They could be put into his alarm clock, and it would make a helpful sound when he needed to remember to do something at a certain time. They would make two things move—the clock and himself, when he took action.

He could put them in his battery powered toy train, and have fun playing together with a friend. The toy hadn’t been used for so long, as it lacked what it needed to fulfil what it was meant to do. Now with these versatile and helpful batteries, the train could get moving again. He could use it in his audio player, to make lovely soft music for a relaxing dinner setting. They would help enhance the eating experience, in this way. They could be used to power the little hand-held stitching machine that mother had, that could sew some item of clothing.

Such things were valuable. Though when left alone and uncharged, they couldn’t do anything or be of any service, in reality, they could help provide and help nearly all the things he’d seen at the shop—if they were in the right place, together with the right items, and well charged up.

Helping others to do what they were designed to do, is like a useful set of batteries being used. No one can do what they are meant to and need to, when all alone, without the power of help. If you feel you aren’t as flashy, and attractive, and fun looking as other’s seem to be with their gifts and talents and abilities, maybe your role is to help them. To roll into place, in the small, humble, out of sight, tight confined area, and do what they can’t do. Then, though you are not seen, all that is seen or heard—like a moving toy train, or audio player—is because of your assistance.

Yet, even the battery couldn’t do its job of powering up something else and filling in the needed place, if it weren’t for the electricity and charging device that filled it with what it needed.

In order to be of any help to something, it needs to have time away from helping and working, to just be real still and be hooked up to the source of power. When it’s filled up and ready, then it can help others.

Though unseen most of the time, it is very valuable, needed, depended on, and without out these, so much can’t happen.

Be like a battery that gets filled up with God’s Spirit; then be willing to be placed in the right spot—an unseen and small place. Then things can get moving. Your help behind the scenes makes many things possible.

If the batteries weren’t willing to be removed from where they were for a time recharging, then things come to a standstill. If the charged battery didn’t want to be placed in the small humble area, then it couldn’t be used. It needs to be willing to do both. When it does, it becomes very valuable and essential.

A Carpenter's Tools

There was a carpenter who knew his tools well. He knew how to make them do whatever he needed. They didn't rule him, he was boss, and would use them again and again. Now, unlike people, these tools didn't complain if they weren't getting used as much as another tool, or fussy if they were being used to the point of wearing down. They were just there when they were needed.

Each tool was used in varied amounts, depending on the job that the man was working on.

However, one day, just for fun, let's say that all the tools had a get-together and tried to work out a schedule of when and how much each one would be used. They decided that for fairness, as their limited view and knowledge thought it to be, they would put this plan into being.

Now imagine how things were when such a carpenter needed to get to work, and tried to use these do-things-their-own-right-way tools.

He goes to take down his saw, but finds there is a sign on it saying, "Available tomorrow, at 3:00 PM, and no later than 6:00 PM."

"Most unusual indeed!" he might think. "Why, I worked to pay for that saw myself, so I could always have one when I needed to work. I guess that project will have to wait until tomorrow."

Then he looks around to see what tool IS available. They each have different signs and time schedules. A note on his workbench says, "For the good of us all we have implemented new procedures."

Well, since one tool was ready and able for use right then, he picked it up, took off the sign and got to work on a small project. It was a pair of needle nose pliers that he needed to use to fix a broken, small chain. He was glad when that was done. Thankfully, by the time that project was finished, another tool was nearly available.

The problem was, that to do most of the jobs he had on his list, he'd need several tools, all at the same time. However, when they took control of how much they worked, and when they could be used, this made it nearly impossible to do so many of his projects.

Finally at the end of the day, in tears, after getting next to nothing done that day, he began to weep. He took off his work glasses and cried into his hands. There was little he could do with tools that weren't available and ready for use.

Wonderfully, when he opened his eyes, he saw that the tools themselves had been crying too. They saw how silly it was to be the one to choose who could work and when and how much and what to be used for. Since they didn't have the job list or know most of the projects that needed to be completed, they couldn't make wise decisions on it. This should be left in the hand of the carpenter who knew.

But what they could do was refuse to complain on the days they had to work harder, and not whine if they were out of use for longer periods of time, or if others seem to get more use than they.

The tears of repentance wetted and washed away their labels and limits they'd put on themselves. They came now to the carpenter and surrendered themselves to his hands—for when and for however long, if at all, they were used.

The carpenter smiled. Now at last his big dreams and plans could start to work. Time was short and he really needed to get busy. When he shared the ideas with the tools and they saw the bigger picture of all that was needed, they were very supportive and wished to do whatever they could to make it become a reality.

They could have gotten this whole big idea explained before, if they'd only asked. But they were glad now that they put their petty comparing and complaining aside, and gave their all, in whatever way was needed, to bring a great idea into reality.

Pearl Necklace

Isabella was looking at her pearl necklace. It was a lovely one indeed. But she was crying. Each pearl was given to her after a particular hard time in her life. She would then place it on her strand. As she looked at the necklace of many pearls she was remembering some of the hardships she had endured when that pearl was given. It's almost like the tears are what had formed the shiny pearl.

"Was it worth it? All that I went through?" Just a simple pearl necklace didn't seem like a very high payback for some of the things that she endured.

With teary eyes she looked up. Standing there beside her was the King.

"Come, I wish to show you something," he said.

She did as instructed and followed where he led.

There was a very large vault that he let her see inside of, filled with innumerable treasures and endless jewels.

"You see each of the pearls that you hold now within your hand? Each one is like a key that opens a new part of this vault. Each one represents a large amount of treasures that you can have access to. These treasures are mine, and you can have use of as many sections of it as you have pearls for. Each pearl represents a different place in the vault."

"Oh!" she thought. She had no idea about this.

"I tried to tell you this before," the king said. "But sometimes it's tears that help to clear the vision and enable you to better understand. Do you see it now? Do you realise what I have stored up for you, my dear princess?"

Isabella nodded. She was a bit in shock and amazement.

The king led her over to sit down once again.

"Is there something you need now? Is there a particular pearl that what you went through a tough time and earned it, and it is still hurting you a bit, just the memory of it? Tell me, and I'll bring out some treasure from that section of my vast and endless vault."

Isabella looked at her necklace again. There was one pearl that was causing her the tears she had been crying. It seemed a bit immature to still be crying about something from so long in the past. She was rather hesitant to even bring it up.

"Tell me," the king firmly asked.

Shyly she confessed what had been bothering her. He noted the pearl that was given for that difficult experience, and rose without saying anything and made his way to the vault.

Within a short while he was back holding a large and beautiful dress, complete with jewellery to match, and a golden head decoration as well.

“Try this on,” he said to a stunned Isabella. “Oh, and I forgot to tell you, that each thing that comes out of the vault comes along with a new experience for you to enjoy as well, one that completely erases the dark and difficult memory of the past.

“So, are you ready to have some fun? It’ll be quite some time before we get back. Are you sure you’re not in the middle of doing other things? Because once you put on this outfit, we’re going to have a really great time, for how long, I can’t quite say yet.”

Isabella couldn’t think of anything else she wanted to do than to enjoy whatever fun was planned for then.

“It certainly really was worth it,” she whispered, while showing the king she was dressed and ready for whatever fun he had in mind.

The Royal Knight

Sorgon the famous and royal knight entered the palace. It was to be his place of rest for the night. He often was away for months at a time, even years at times. But tonight it was his roof over head.

He put aside his garments, weaponry, bags, and foot wear. He would receive a full washing from the wash servants and maids, and be treated to a very good meal.

But he noticed a strange thing when he entered the dining area. Though he no longer had on his soiled garments, and heavy metal wear and accessories, his mind was filled with so much from his trip that he felt no different. He felt weighted down and weary, and hardly noticed anyone else but himself.

“Let me try that again,” he said to himself, and exited the room.

“This time, before I walk in I’ll change my mental clothes, wash my thoughts from memories, or even dreams of how I wished things would have gone on my last mission. I don’t want to bring that to the table. It looks full enough. And such thoughts, like baggage, or rather like inferior food, will only make me less able to absorb and enjoy what is being spread before me. It’ll aid me in my digestion as well, to relax now and let go of whatever is pressing on me.”

Before entering the room he paused and closed his eyes. The curtain covering the doorway of the dining hall was closed as well. He would open it when he was ready, really ready. One moment passed and then another. Finally, he had changed his mental and emotional garments, had a relaxed look on his face. He knocked. The curtains were drawn aside by a couple servants, and the one at the head of the table motioned for him to enter, and partake of all that was spread before them.

And what a feast, a very enjoyable feast, it was. With his heart and mind ready to enjoy this time, and his weights of heart and body no longer bothering him, he was nourished well.

It was some time before being excused to retire to his comfortable bedroom. He was sure he would sleep well tonight. He needed healing. He needed nourishment. And this time at the palace was a wonderful and needed time.

Seeing his condition and need of rejuvenation, the one at the head of the table said, “Perhaps you should keep your next missions a bit shorter, and allow yourself more time to visit. The room will be kept available for you anytime you visit.”

The knight nodded and offered thanks. He would be sure to visit for renewal more frequently. Perhaps his missions would get done more quickly anyway, if he had time for deep refreshing and hearty, unhindered,

nourishment. He'd have more strength to complete things, and could then return for rest and refreshing and restoration sooner.

"You know, you don't have to wait until there is little life left in your bones and body before coming for a time to be re-inspired and renewed," the one at the head of the table said.

This came as a rather new thought to the knight. And it was a very pleasant thought indeed. It wouldn't be considered irresponsible to leave for a while, something he was called to do, in order to receive new empowerment. In fact it was the most responsible way to live. And he'd be able to actually enjoy the company of his host as well, being a pleasant visitor also, rather than just feeling he was on his last moments each time he came.

"I shall return more regularly, if that is what you suggest. And will enjoy it heartily," replied the knight.

From that moment on, things were vastly different for him, for instead of going from one weak time of struggle in the realm of the king to another time of weariness, rather he went from one time of strength to another.

"From Strength to Strength" was what was written on his brass girdle. Now he understood what it meant. He loved this new way of operating. And the new wave of joy he felt from his times of refreshment, gave him new and unexpected strength.

When at the table one night, during one of his regular visits, he noticed a new servant lady standing there, close by the king. She was dressed in royal apparel and seemed to hope she was being noticed.

When the knight looked up, she smiled.

"This is Emily. I have invited her to join you, join us, tonight. I think she will make lovely company and good communication."

The knight nodded and motioned to the place at the table nearby."

"I must say, I couldn't help but notice you," he said when she was seated.

Her shy smile, as she looked down a bit, was politely brief, and before long they were chatting together.

Surprises in this palace never ceased to take the knight by surprise, and intrigue and inspire him. If only he had come for refreshment far more regularly in the past, who knows what he might have enjoyed then. But, the past is past, and now he was glad he had made the change to visit more frequently.

"So what on to next?" he thought as he rose the next morning. "Whatever it will be, I feel greatly refreshed and ready with vigour to do whatever I am needed to do for the king."

He donned on his cleaned and shiny attire, and was seen riding out to win yet another victory for the king.

"I do hope he returns soon," Emily thought, as she looked over the balcony and waved as he rode off. "It's doing him so much good."

The Perfect Jewel

Inside a crystal pillar, one as clear as glass, sat a perfect jewel for those passing by to see. If you could have heard, and if a jewel could have thoughts, this is what you would have heard. As the jewel looked at each one passing by and looking in at it, it wondered who, if anyone, would be able to release it from its crystal cage and confinement.

“Perhaps if I shine really bright and catch all the rays of light that I can, then someone will be very determined to have me. Of course it seems nearly impossible that anyone can reach through the impenetrable substance that surrounds me. But I do wish at least for someone to try.”

Now, as sensible people, they knew that glass was something they just couldn't put their hand through. Content they were to look and to enjoy the beauty before passing on their way.

One day, however, something happened that shook all reality as it was known, and changed things completely. An earthquake shattered all glass in the room, brought down the ceiling, broke up the floor. Down the glass pillar came with a thud at first, then a shattering sound. Then all was quiet. Quiet enough for some thoughts to be pondered, if a jewel can think.

“I guess I am out. There was something or someone powerful enough to release me. Now all I can hope for is for someone to pick me up. I can't say I'm better off laying here in the broken shards of what used to be home.”

The jewel envisioned being placed on a velvet cloth, handled and talked about, oohed and awed over. It seems that is the only way it would feel the most appreciated. It wasn't enough to just be looked at, it wanted to be handled and touched, and to hear words of honour and appreciation.

The wind blew through the now broken windows and doorless threshold, and a tear, or several of them, started to pour out of the very heart of this jewel. But it was not forgotten, and a pair of soft gloves picked it up and carried it in a bosom.

“Wump-pump,” it could hear the heart of the one holding it warmly and closely. It felt so good. But just where it was being taken it didn't have a clue.

The jewel was placed in the hand of a child, who squealed with laughter at such a special treat.

“Although I did like being admired, and I did like the thought of hearing words of appreciation, and the thought of being on a soft place for many to enjoy, this actually feels right. Instead of glass I feel the warm hands of a child, perhaps even a wee bit soiled, surrounding me. Instead of a crowd of people looking at me, and giving me the feeling that I am giving joy to many, I sense only a few around. But at least they can have me closer than the crowds did when I was in a glass encasement. Somehow I feel this is better.”

Though life was much different for the jewel, and nothing she had dreamed of, and perhaps something she wouldn't have asked for, if it could have chosen its own destiny, it seemed better in many ways.

Together the few children had fun holding this jewel in a dark room and seeing how it looked when they let the light shine on it. They took turns holding it, one by one, one at a time also, so they could feel that though it was for all of them, it was also for each one of them, individually as well. They could feel like it was just theirs for a time.

If the jewel could have spoken, it might have said, “Ah, this feels better than being on velvet or in a crystal glass pillar, tight and secure, because I've made a child smile. I wasn't meant for the crowds. I'm too small. But I can cheer a small one and be near to them.”

When the children were sleeping, into the room came the one who had picked the jewel up and out of the glass ruins of where it used to be.

“Hello there, little beauty.”

The jewel, if it could have had eyes to see, ears to hear, and a mouth to reply, might say, “Thank you for rescuing me and finding me the best place to be. I'm happy in this place.”

Things were always rather different than what the jewel imagined to be its type of perfect. But it really was the best, and everyone knew it was right where it was meant to be. So what if no one else, other than the small family got to see and appreciate its beauty. Those who did, were very happy to have it right there with them.

And as the years went on, it learned all kind of things. It heard lots of things, and saw lots of really interesting things, right where it was. It really was the perfect place. For a jewel in the hands of children who liked its sparkle, made the jewel glad to be there.

Fun Falling Leaves

The leaf fell to the ground. “Whee!” said the toddler who had seen it fall. Picking it up again he blew into the air and dropped it and let it flutter once again to the ground. Why stop with one leaf? He then took handfuls that had fallen on the ground. Now he twirled and he dropped both handfuls of leaves in to the air.

He laughed! Though it made him kind of dizzy to spin so fast. He lost his footing and plopped on the ground. He used this chance to notice yet more leaves. Instead of standing up right away he chose to sit there for a time looking at what was around him. He looked closely at a leaf in his hands. It was brown and yellow and had nice lines on it. He plucked at it a bit and tore off bits of this soon-to-decay wonder of nature.

Something tickled his nose, and another something was on his head. More leaves had just fallen off the tree in the breeze. He looked up just in time to see yet more freshly flutter to the ground. He looked over to see his older brother, though still young, manage the big rake as he tried to create a hill of leaves. He raked them into a pile, and soon was running and jumping in them.

The toddler thought this was another great use of these wonderful things called leaves. He went over to show his mama a leaf he had picked up.

“That’s very nice dear,” she spoke and placed the boy on her lap. They sang a cheery song while the somewhat older boy continued his running and plopping in the leaves.”

Mama spoke to them. “Remember last season, when it was warm, and you were running in the sprinkler as it sprayed? And remember the season before, when we were digging just over there to plant some flowers? And now, soon, all this place that is covered with leaves will be covered in a white, fluffy, but very good layer of snow. We can walk in it and build a snow man!”

Each of the seasons had something pleasant. But in order to enjoy what came next they’d need to move on from the previous one. They couldn’t have a pile of leaves, with everything covered in snow, dig to plant flowers, all the while running through the sprinkler feeling very warm. One special thing at a time. But if they were patient, the seasons would return again, and missed-out-on fun could be there again.

“We can enjoy what we have, and look forward to new fun later on. We don’t have to be sad that we can’t have what we used to have, for in the right time we’ll get it again. And if we spend all our time thinking about what is past, in the previous season, we’ll miss what is right here for us! –Something that also will pass. So let’s enjoy each thing while it lasts.”

Clay Jar

“It’s broken,” sobbed the girl, holding a clay jar in her hands. This was a special one that she had worked on making. This jar had coloured stones and bits of coloured and clear glass in it. Light could come through parts of it in this way. If a candle was placed in the jar, some coloured light would be seen shining through.

But now it was cracked with parts breaking off. Perhaps it could be fixed, but it would forever be somewhat different than when it was completely and totally whole. A stack of books had mistakenly been placed on it. It wasn’t made to hold up that much weight suddenly set on it. What could be done?

She needed to get away from the problem for a while. The more she looked at it, the sadder it made her, and a bit mad too. She hadn’t been the one to place those books on top of it. But the one who did, didn’t realise what would happen.

She should have placed it somewhere out of the way, she thought. She partly blamed herself for not caring for it better. Into a box with all the broken pieces it was placed, with a soft cloth around it, and she put it up on shelf. The girl then got her jacket and boots on, and a hat, and would go out to walk in the drizzling rain.

Rain wouldn’t matter to her, her face was wet from tears already. Her heart seemed to be crying some tears of its own. A bit of rain would blend well with her feelings.

“Why does it matter to me when something I work hard on gets ruined? Maybe it’s because of the plans I had for it. Maybe the fact that it’s broken means my plans are going to be broken too. It’s my feelings of satisfaction in a plan being done that I think I wanted most of all. And I do like seeing nice things. Broken things make me sad. I wish things could stay nice on and on forever.”

What her plan was had been kept a secret. But it didn’t matter now, she thought. The girl mused and found out what was on her heart as she walked in the wetness of her yard. “I will ask my father about it. Perhaps there is something he can do to help me,” she decided.

Later on, in the evening, while sitting beside the fireplace, the girl carefully took out her special, yet now broken, jar and showed it to her father.

“Hmm. I can see you have put a lot of love into this...” he said, looking up at her. He saw into her heart. It wasn’t just an item. He knew the secret on her heart. Yes, it wasn’t only work. It was love, because, well, she burst into tears: “I wanted to give it to you as gift; something to keep your pens in, or to use with a candle at night.” The father placed it gently on the side table, and called her up into his arms.

“I know you’d like to show me your love through such a lovely item, and I do appreciate it—the love that is. But just because the mistakes of others seemed to have messed up your special gift, the fact that you made it is what shows me you love me. The gift of your love is still unbroken.” He hugged her and then continued,

“And you know, I think I can help you fix it. That will be the gift of my love for you. When you see that I care about the things that trouble you, the things you wanted to make all perfect for me but just can’t due to other’s mistakes, then you can feel my love in return.

“That is a perfect gift for us both—you give to me the best you can, and I can fix things up for you that broke because of faults and failings. We can both give to each other in this way. So, you gave me your gift, and now I will give one to you. Let’s go to my pottery shop. There’s lots of clay and special stones, and all sorts of things. You can watch me remake it into an even better one, if you’ll let me. Would you like that?”

The girl nodded, and off they went, hand in hand—her little hand in his big hand. She knew if her broken surprises and gifts were in his hands, all would be well; perhaps better than ever.

Sandbox

The digger was digging a big wide pit in the park, just when little Sammy and his mother went there to play.

“Oh no!” he cried out to his mother. “They are ruining our nice place! What can we do now?”

He curled into his mother’s shoulder, as she knelt on the grass beside him to comfort him.

“Maybe they are trying to make something really special for us, do you think?” she shared hopefully.

But it wasn’t any comfort now, for it was now when he wanted to play. And however nice some new feature would be, it still had messed up and removed that certain spot of land that used to be played on.

Sammy was too upset to stand there and watch and see what was being done. He and his mother turned to walk away. They’d need to find somewhere else to play today.

A week later, Mother came to Sammy with some interesting news. “Now, I know it made you upset about the new work that was being done at the playground, but remember how you always wanted a really big sandbox to play in? Guess what? That is exactly what has been built at the playground! The biggest sandbox you have ever seen! And not only that, but it has a water play features, too. When you build with sand, it helps to have water too. That makes the sand stick better together, doesn’t it?”

Sammy was getting excited.

“Let’s go to the little shop up the road first and get some toys for sand play, and then we can bring your cars and your own toy digger, and have a great time at the park. Does that sound fun?” Mother suggested.

“Yes, Mother!” Sammy said, and quickly found his way to his shoes and cap. This was a day for healing—the healing of the sadness of loss that he had felt. He couldn’t have everything that he used to have, but in return he got something he’d always wanted. There was still plenty of grass to run and play on, and this park feature would make it all the more fun going there to play.

It was healing for his little heart to run his fingers through the sand, drive his cars to make roads through it, and together with mother build a nice big castle out of sand.

Somehow even the fact that it was sand was a help in teaching Sammy this important thing—of letting some things go, that aren’t meant to be for always. Because, of course the sand castles he would build wouldn’t stay always the same and remain unbroken. He’d need to build new things when he came next time. But his mother made sure to take a good photo of the special things he made with the sand, so he could show his father and older brother. Somehow he felt more grown up now than ever. He was learning to let go of things that weren’t there forever, and realise that there would always be something new and special to discover.

At first it was a shock for him to find out that the lovely castle and roads he had made a day or two before, were no longer intact. He had to realise that some things weren’t meant to be for always. But then he was glad, in a way, that the sand was flattened out again, because that way he could make something new.

He learned how to create lots of things with the sand, and he learned to let go of the just-for-now things, and appreciate the bigger and better things that never changed. Mother reminded him of other things that often change, and we like it to be so.

“The sky, for example,” Mother said. “We like having different types of weather, and different colours in the sky, don’t we?”

“Or different food to eat. It’s gone after the meal, Mother. All the food you made so nice gets chewed up and used up. But we are happy anyway, because our tummy feels happy, and we can have new food the next day!” Sammy added his own thoughts.

“Yes. That’s one thing that stays the same—our hunger. And that means we are alive and growing too. And the sun is always in the sky too, even if some days are cloudy. It’s nice that not everything changes, but it’s nice that some things do.”

Sammy ran off to get his broken plastic shovel. “This changed, and I’m sad about it. I didn’t want this to change in a bad way.”

“Yes, dear. Something do change in a way we don’t like. But maybe that can teach us something.” Mother placed Sammy, still holding the broken shovel, on her lap. “Is there something we can learn from this broken toy?”

“Not to step on it,” Sammy said.

“That’s right. We need to watch our step, or things can go wrong. But once we learn that, then sometimes something even better happens.”

“Like what?” Sammy wondered.

“Like getting a new and better shovel that won’t break so easily—perhaps one made for digging in the tough dirt. Then you can use it both for sand play, and you can help me in the garden, and learn something new! Would you like that?”

Sammy nodded, and the two of them went out to find a garden trowel and begin their first gardening class, digging a place for the peas to be planted. Sammy was learning, day by day, things that would make him a brave boy, and later a wise man.

Hang Glider Ride

The man was going to go on a hang glider ride. It was the moment he had prepared long for. He wanted to get a good aerial view of the land. He realised there was much he didn’t know about this place. Just walking down streets and talking with people, or going into shops didn’t reveal much about the place. Because most people also only knew about as much as what their neighbours would say, and they in turn only knew what their next door neighbours or friends talked about.

He knew there was much more to be discovered. So early one morning with his friend he drove up to a lookout on a mountain. There he could take off and fly over the land. It was windy there, and wasn’t that easy to set up his hang glider. But he persevered and at last was soon soaring over the whole area.

There were lovely parks, trees, clusters of houses, ponds, and a river that wended around here and there and through. Then he spotted something that caught his interest. He marked the spot in his mind to go for some land exploration there. In a cover at the beach front there seemed to be a big cave entrance. However it was in a place that was nearly inaccessible, except by some tough climbing and hiking. He was determined to do just that.

The following week, with his hiking and light camping gear strapped on, he and his friend went on their mission of discovery. They loved to discover new things. The first night was spent under the stars, sleeping in their sleeping bags. They were closer to the goal, they hoped. But with no maps of this area to lead them, it was an adventure and struggle to locate what they set out to find—the huge cave entrance. When the sun rose, so did they, and continued walking and wading in water, and climbing over rough and sometimes steep rocky areas.

When the sun was hot over head they were feeling rather at a loss. They seemed no closer to their goal. They wished again for that clear aerial view. It seemed so easy then when looking down over the land. It was clear to someone above just what was the best and fastest and safest way to go.

“I wish there was someone looking down from up there who could communicate with us and show us the way to go,” the man expressed.

“Yes, it would make it so much easier,” his friend acknowledged.

Just then like a flash into his mind came again the picture of the aerial view that he had seen when up there, almost like it was projected into his mind. All of a sudden he recognised just where they were. And they were not far off from their goal.

Following the mental map that he suddenly saw again in his mind, the friends found their way. It was tough, but they reached their goal and were so very glad.

At the cave entrance they stopped and put down their belongings. They were ready for a rest before the next adventure of exploring inside.

As they were eating and planning their next move, the man had a serious thought. “You know, it’s not going to be any easier in there—probably even harder to not get lost, and to try to find our way. It’s dark and that makes it dangerous.”

“Yes, a map indeed is what we need—and light!” his friend agreed. But a map they didn’t have, or so they thought. And so that’s what they did, thought and thought.

“How can we make this trip a successful one, and both find our way in and out and then back to our home again?”

The more they thought about it, the more they realised how unprepared they were. But then something wonderful happened! As they neared the cave entrance to just peer in once again, they spotted a metal box.

What was in it? A map, some rope, a flashlight!

“What is this? Why, it’s just what we need! We can go ahead after all! What a great find! Someone obviously put it here for explorers like us. I guess we aren’t alone, after all, in our journey. Someone is around, and may yet come by to visit.”

The man and his friend were overjoyed! They found the map to be accurate, the rope to be strong, the light worked, and a successful trip they had.

When the man made it safely home he remembered that it all started with a desire to see things from a different point of view, from the way someone up in the sky sees things down here.

Chicks and Hopes

The old grandfather blew on his pipe, making a melody that sounded through the simple stone and clay cottage. The little girl who had been playing near his feet with her dolls, paused, turned, and then began to cry. She came over and hugged the old man. He stopped the music. He knew just what the sorrow was.

The music stirred up her memory to the loss their family had just endured—the loss of her daddy. That was a tune he also often played, on those very pipes. The old man was trying to get over the pain of loss by making the music be heard again in the house; however it was bringing a strain of pain to the girl’s heart. She still needed time to heal.

Thinking perhaps she was not ready yet to hear the music, he began to set the pipes down. But the girl encouraged him to go on. As long as she was free to let the tears flow while being held in a loving embrace, she could manage—and wanted to hear—the music again.

So old grandfather began again, yet it sounded like the sobs of crying were the words to the song. The music and tears blended. Yet, by and by, as the melody continued, the crying softened, and before too long there was a peaceful smile on the girl's face. Through the music she was able to recall happy times that she and her daddy had together, rather than only the feelings of loss.

When the song was ended, the girl sat up and was ready for a walk. The old man with his cane took her out to see the chickens. For a long while they looked around seeing what the chickens were doing, and checking on the new cute little chicks. They made the girl laugh.

The old man placed a chick in the girl's hands and she smiled. Then he asked her, "Where is the egg? The perfect egg, so smooth and unbroken? How would the chick have come out if it hadn't broken? Does the mother hen miss her nice smooth, round eggs? No, I don't think so; not when she sees the chicks that hatched from them."

When they walked away from the chickens, the girl was thinking about what her grandfather had said.

Things were different now than they had been. Things weren't perfectly rounded out, like they had seemed before—like hopes and dreams and wishes in a shell of an egg, ready to hatch. But now her father was gone, and it was like seeing a broken egg shell, all empty.

"I just need to look for the chick—the hopes that still can come true—and perhaps because the egg shell of our perfect life broke. Maybe something new will happen for me now..." she mused, and understood.

When she was 14 years old, something did happen. "Would you like to come work with me on my farm?" a lady who knew their family invited the now young lady.

"I know it's not been easy for you, without a father all this time, but that is why I want to give you a chance to learn about animals and food growing and working with wool. You will be glad to know these things when it's time to have little ones of your own. I can teach you about weaving and making cloth. I can help you make things out of wood and clay.

"You know, I once had a daughter too," the woman said. "But she too has gone, like your father. I was sad because I so much wanted to teach her all that I knew, and to one day see her care for her own little ones."

This was a wonderful opportunity that would not have happened if nothing had gone wrong in either of their lives. It seemed more than perfect now. If she knew all these skills she could not only take care of her own family one day, but could help be a support to her mother and grandfather too.

"Oh, thank you!" she said, "I would like that very much!"

The girl began to mentally list all the skills she would like to learn first—such as knitting warm clothes, making cheese from fresh milk, riding a horse, planting and caring for crops, and so forth.

She was now old enough to learn them well and enjoy the challenge. She would stay at that farm some of the time and learn as much and as she could.

When she was 16, she surprised her mother with a very special birthday gift. "Here mother!" she handed her a package. When it was opened, a lovely warm shawl was inside, as well as some warm socks.

"I've not only made you this one, but ten others besides. And you can sell them and get whatever you need from the sales of them," she told her mother.

"Oh, daughter, you are such a hard worker, and have learned so many new things, and so quickly too. You've made me very happy—and the kind lady too, from what I hear. She is at last able to sing again and have hope that she can make a difference in others' lives," her mother said and gave her daughter a loving embrace.

Beautiful Flowers

The girl was sneezing like she was made of wind.

“Achoo!” again it sounded, followed by a nose wipe.

“Will I ever get better?” the lament groaned, even though it had hardly been half a day since she began resting in bed from the cold the girl had suddenly contracted.

Mother put on a soothing audio for the girl to listen to while she attempt to rest in between various bodily disturbances.

“Why don't you play a little game,” her mother suggested. “Count on your fingers ten of the things you are glad you don't have to be doing today. I'll start the first one for you, are you ready?”

The little girl nodded, so mother started with, “You can be glad that you aren't out digging in the rain, like a hardworking construction man might be today.”

The girl's bed all of a sudden felt all the more comfortable and warm just thinking about it, then she added her own thought,

“I'm glad I don't have to be a bus driver, as I feel so unwell in buses. I can have cleaner air here while I get well, with the window open to the garden.”

“That's right! What else?” Mother encouraged.

“I'm glad I'm not in a hospital bed...”

Mother added, “Nor working there, but can rest instead and get all the things you need.”

The girl nodded. It seemed her sneezes had stopped and her nose was giving her a break too. She started to feel rather sleepy all of a sudden. Her mother filled and brought the girl a hot water bottle wrapped in a cloth to soothe and make her feel all snug while she drifted to a nap. She could finish her be-glad-it's-not-today game when she woke.

Somehow the time of thinking happy thoughts made her begin to heal faster, it seemed.

After a long and cosy nap, she started again:

“I'm glad I'm not sleeping in a cold tent with icy wind and snow all around, like those have to do who climb the tallest mountain in the world—Mt. Everest.”

She paused and then thought of a few more,

“I'm not in a desert hungry and thirsty and lost.

“I'm not blind and handicapped, trying to beg on the street corner in order to survive.

“I'm not an orphan in a huge, cold, poor place with hundreds of others, yet feeling very lonely and wishing for a family of my own.”

Mother came in then with a warm and nourishing drink. “I thought of another one,” she said.

“I'm glad that you aren't an elderly lady yet, but still young and I can be with you and take care of you,” Mother said, stroking the girl's head.

“And I have you still with me!” the girl added.

When at last they reached the goal of ten things the girl was glad was not happening with her that day, they settled down for a nice time of story reading.

“I have just the perfect book to read to you!” Mother exclaimed. “It's called, ‘Hope for Another Day’, about a girl who suffered a serious accident, yet found reasons every day to be glad and do some good for others, in spite of her lack of ability.”

This sounded great.

Mother read a few chapters, and then her little girl rested quietly again with something to listen to. Mother checked to make sure she was also drinking plenty of water, for that would make a big difference in the speed of her healing.

A week later the girl was out in the garden, feeling as good as new. It wasn't the first time she had been outside, for even when she was unwell, some time out in the fresh air was a part of her day and helped speed on her healing.

She was picking flowers and putting them in a vase to give to her mother.

She wrote a little card that said,

"Thank you, Mother, for your kind care of me when I wasn't feeling well. And thank you for teaching me to think about all the good things, and to be glad. I'm happier now because of it. Now, even if it's something smaller that troubles me, I stop to think about the good that I have, and the troubles I am glad that I don't have. It's helped me to be braver and smile."

When mother walked into the kitchen to wash the dishes, a lovely surprise was waiting for her.

"Oh darling! How very nice of you! The flowers are nearly as beautiful as the words you said here. They encouraged me so much. And the flowers will continue to cheer me and anyone who walks in, for sure."

The girl smiled and was thankful she had shown appreciation back to the one who had and continued to do so much for her. Maybe things weren't perfect—they never were or would be. Sickness, sorrow, hurts, lacks, would keep popping up in life. But if she learned some tips how to manage them and still be cheerful through them, then nothing could get her really down, not for too long at least. She could ride above them, like someone using a beach wave to move them along.

The Mechanic

The mechanic opened up the large door of the garage. It was going to be a good work day. He had lots of fix-ups to tend to. Several appointments with car owners were on his schedule.

"Let's see... Mr. Broneshire is on for an oil change at 12 o'clock noon. I'll need to ensure I'm here for that. Oh, and I see I have a tire change in the afternoon with Mrs. Elderesteir. And, of course I need to keep working on the four cars and vehicles that are in for repairs. Families are depending on them being ready on time, or sooner if possible."

The mechanic opened his tool boxes to see that all was available and ready for the tasks at hand.

"Hmmm, one of the wrenches have seemed to go missing. I wonder if it's still over by the car, or has been borrowed by another worker... I'll need to find it right away. I don't want missing tools or it makes jobs harder to be done."

While the mechanic looked and asked around for his missing tools, a certain customer was just pulling in. This was his first appointment of the day. Well, they came earlier than expected, to ensure plenty of time to get their car in good working order, in case something else was detected that needed fixing. They quietly waited until the mechanic was seen.

When he came back with tools in hand and a smile on his face, the customer was glad--and so was the mechanic. He was ready to help. "Had to chase down a few wandering tools... but I'm here for you, and glad to see you arrived in good timing, nice and early, for your fix up. With the spare time we have, I might even be able to do a few extras."

"Oh, that'd be real nice of you. I sure appreciate your work and help. You know I depend on this vehicle, but I could never get around if it wasn't for your regular assistance to keep things working right," the customer replied.

So the mechanic got right to work and checked everything over, adjusting this or that, fixing the other thing, and making sure all was in good working order. They had a nice chat together, and the customer felt like he'd learned quite a bit by the time the job was done.

"Thanks so very much," the customer said.

"Sure thing, anytime," the mechanic waved.

And it really was true. There was never a time when this customer needed help, and the mechanic denied his assistance. For longer jobs it worked better to work out a scheduled appointment, of course, but they had never been turned away from this mechanic's garage in the past when sudden emergencies occurred, or a little quick help was needed.

The customer never had to go on and on with nagging problems, or tolerate things that weren't right about the vehicle that put them and others at risk. Just a quick trip to the fix-it place, and time taken to explain what was the problem. Communicating always came first, then problems were looked into and solutions given. Then a time of relief and ease. Time with the mechanic always paid off in the end, even if it seemed to take time.

Friendly Melanie

Melanie was sitting sadly on the side. She watched the other players who seemed to be enjoying the vigorous game of ball play. Why wasn't she invited? She didn't know. As far as she could tell, when she last counted, the sum total of legs were two; arms, two; eyes and ears two as well. And they were all in good working order.

Maybe the ones chosen for this game were being judged by something other than physical ability. If they had looked into her heart, the players who chose their team would have seen that she was really just trying to be a part of their lives and wished for someone to wish for her to be so. They might have seen that she was like a puzzle piece looking for where to fit in.

But they had their minds on scoring points--something that would be long, long forgotten, perhaps even by next week. Numbers wouldn't matter later on, when other new interests and passionate pursuits moved their mind on. But it hurt, and Melanie began to cry, in her heart that is. She decided to go exploring somewhere else.

Maybe, just maybe there was someone who wished for a friend, who likewise didn't feel or wasn't included in the lively play. Since she couldn't find a friend, the best option would be to go and be a friend; even if it was to someone that she didn't particularly understand or feel an affinity with. She could just be a stand in, for a friend for the person, in place of the person they probably would rather be with. "I'll just act like their friend," Melanie thought, as she made her way somewhat shyly over to a young lady holding a baby.

Since this young mother was often awake in the night, she missed much sleep, and it was hard to go hanging out at night with others, for any time she could rest, she must. However this tended to give others the impression that she wanted to be alone--especially when others came around to see her as she was putting her baby to sleep and asked them to please not disturb just then. And at times the mother was short tempered, again, due to over tiredness. It was her time of learning and growth in heart and mind and

emotionally. It wasn't easy, and caused many to draw the wrong conclusions about her and to misunderstand, or just not understand at all.

But Melanie was going to take the risk, since it was clear the young mother was both awake and happy for company, though alone. Her baby was now sleeping in the stroller nearby, and she sat on a large rock looking at the game in the nearby field.

When Melanie approached her, the young mother looked up with surprise. At first she thought she was being asked to join in the game; that someone had sent for her. But seeing the look on Melanie's face, she realised that it was a friend coming to join her.

Rather awkwardly, she moved over a bit and motioned for Melanie to sit with her there, which she did. They weren't sure what to talk about first, but after a bit they got warmed up. Melanie chose a topic that this young mother was sure to have things to say about, and quite possibly not many to hear about it. She asked about the baby, and what his new developments were, his likes and dislikes, and how she was adjusting to life as a mother.

Knowing the right thing to ask, giving another person the chance to speak about what is on their heart, is the key to truly "being a friend". Sometimes it seems like a waste of time, just talk, but it's a need to have a way to say things, it's part of the completion of the feeling of living.

Melanie knew she'd asked the right topic, for the young mother talked on and on. It seemed like it had been weeks that she'd been storing up all these things in her heart and mind. At last--what seemed nearly an hour--the conversation quieted down, and the mother realising that Melanie too might have her own friendship needs, said, "The baby is about to wake up, he's stirring now, and I'll need to tend to his needs, but would you like to go for a walk in a bit, when I return? He'll be happy to be strolled along with us."

What a nice idea, Melanie thought. "Sure, that sounds great. Is there anything I can help you with?"

Then she knew what was needed and said, "I'll prepare a snack for the two of us, and fill some bottles of water. We can bring them along. Feeding the baby means you need to feed yourself, and as you were saying to me, there's not always time to do both. I'll see you soon then--as soon as you wish, without pressure. Just give him all he needs, and if he is happy, then we can go. If it seems he's unhappy for a walk at this time, I'll just bring you the snack and we can walk later, another day."

Melanie said this with a smile. She had gained much insight after hearing all that this young mother experienced each day. This gave her on-target friendship ideas. It paid off to listen to someone else and to gain insight into their way of thinking and feeling.

The young mother gave a grateful nod as she lifted her little one into her arms to walk to the house.

Melanie walked over to the orchard and selected some fine pieces of fruit, picked some ripe strawberries and made her way to the kitchen to prepare the promised snack. A smile was in her heart and on her face. She learned that a good way to feel needed, and to be included, was to first find out just what the needs and wishes of others were, then she could be the friend they longed for. The gratitude they would feel in return would give her the feeling she wanted, that someone loved and enjoyed her company.

The Lizard

The lizard lay in the sun, hoping to catch some warming rays. This was its chance to keep up its warmth and health, otherwise it would just be too cold. It opened a lazy eye every now and then, just to make sure nothing harmful was coming near. When all was well it would slip back into a deep rest.

The only time it really needed to move on this day was when the sunshine seemed to move from its spot, then it needed to go elsewhere, to stay in the sun.

When a cloud covered over the sun, and it started to rain on the at last warmed back of the lizard, it didn't enjoy that. Maybe in the heat of a summer's day it would have been a welcome thing. But on this day as it was trying earnestly to warm up, anything chilly just made the efforts to keep warm, lost.

"Where can I get all nice and feeling good?" the lizard thought. "Oh! Over there. I'll try it."

The "over there" was a little spot shaded from the rain, and also had been recently warmed ground, by a child having sat in that spot to read a book. They had just left, and so lizard moved in. It wasn't sunny again yet, but it would do for now.

While it heard the rain fall, it drifted off to a drowsy rest, that is until a large hand came and took him up. Where he was getting taken, Lizard didn't know. But there was little it could do just yet. However, it was only a moment before it was put down.

"Where am I?" the lizard thought. "It is warmer in here. It's nice, but lacks the freedom."

It had been placed, for the time being, in a large glass box with plants, and a warming light overhead.

It was being put under observation. Not like a pet really, as it was just as wild in nature as ever. But he was being watched, perhaps as a TV almost. The children would peer into the glass and see the shape and size and movements of this lizard. They would get to know it better than just seeing it briefly outdoors every now and then. The things it liked were made available, but of course the freedom to go here and there, wherever it pleased, that would have to wait until later, after the children had learned all they could from it.

One day it was time to open the box. The children took their little friend out into a nature place. The box was on its side now, so that their friend lizard could crawl out anytime and anywhere it wanted to. They decided to leave the box there with some food and water supplies, just in case the lizard still wished to be there. Though it had more freedom to go here and there, it was a nice shelter from the rain, and it did get warmer from the sun, as it was like a mini greenhouse.

Now the lizard was glad it had been placed in a box for a while, and was used as a living lesson and teaching object of observation for children. Now they took good care of it by providing this nice little place to come to, whenever it needed shelter and food, water and warmth. It was worth the time away from the freedom it had known. It had the best of all things now.

Though a mother might for a time be taken from her normal environment and be placed in a new location, being an aid to teaching children, it's only for a time. The future will be better for her because she gave up what she had before; now she has new friends that look after her, and they are a part of her life. Though she always felt she was a completely different species, varying greatly from others she was placed among, that is why it was so. For that is how the children learned.

They needed something or someone very different, to watch and to be with, otherwise there would be little new to have learned. Be glad you are different. Be glad you are where you are. Just be glad. It's not a sad thing to be in a box of confinement, but something that is and will benefit you and others, as you'll see one day.

And if you feel lonely, like there is only one of you around, well, remind yourself that rather than alone, you are just unique and prized by others as very special.

How the stepped on flower survived

(Jesus speaking:) There was a little flower that got stepped on. A cute little flower it was. But its petals were crushed by someone running with a mob. They were going out for a picnic. It wasn't a bad thing they were doing, but still, the little flower was no longer its perky little self. It could no longer stand on its own, but lay close to the ground.

A different noise was heard. It was that of a lawn mower coming to cut the grass. Closer and closer it came to where the flower once stood tall and proud and feeling so complete, like it really was doing what it was created for.

The sound of the mower was very frightening and slightly shook the ground. Very soon it all got dark in the place the flower lay. The sun was no longer shining on this crushed and flattened flower. But that was only for a brief moment. Soon it was just as bright as ever again. The shade had nothing to do with the sun, really, but all to do with the mowing. The mower had passed over the flower and kept cutting its way through the overgrown grass.

When the flower noticed that it had remained safe, and in fact was one of the few things missed getting cut by the mower in that area, it felt rather pleased. It lay there wondering, "How did that happen? I'm safe. I'm still alive, though not as stately as I used to be. Yet if I had been standing ever so erect and fine, there's quite a good chance I would no longer be still standing."

Then another voice joined in the thoughts of this little flower and said, "Yes, when you are low, and humility lays you flat against the breast of the nourishing soil, you are safer. Here let Me help you to stand once more. For there is more yet that I need you to do."

The flower felt the gentle hands lifting it up.

"Were you the one mowing the long grass?" the flower asked.

"I had it done," came the reply.

The flower now saw that the crushing had benefited it.

Yet it wasn't the only one standing. There was another. This one had a different story to tell, of how it was still able to stand.

"Hello, it's good to see you over there," said the first flower to the other.

"Well, I wouldn't be, that's for sure, if it hadn't been for the strong wind that knocked me down for a bit."

So the wind had come and done to one flower somewhat the same deed as the running feet had done to the first. Yet because of both of their unpleasant experiences, and feeling knocked down for a time, now they both still stood. When the real trouble came, of the more permanent type, they were safe, and were bringing beauty to the area.

When the picnickers returned a few hours later, it wasn't the grass that was seen, that had been hiding these little beauties and over shadowing them. Now these few ones remaining on the lawn were the highlights, and clearly seen.

So if something knocks you down, take courage, it might be to spare you from worse trouble that is about to come to all but those with a heart filled with humility. But don't worry, you'll get your chance to shine, when the time is right.