

Story Time with the Master—Book 2

And some Parables

2018-2021 or so (given to CQ) (Unedited and unproofread)

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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 a 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, thought 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 thought 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.

Three Tiny Ants Doing Things Differently

(Jesus speaking:) Three tiny ants were trying to get their little load of goodies they had gathered into the same hole, all at the same time. It wasn’t going to work. One ant realised he’d need to wait, and took a

step back to do just that. Another ant just pushed and pushed and forced his way, making him be further ahead than the last ant. The final one couldn't do much but wait until the pushing was done, and then he made his way in.

If you are to look at each of these ants, you'll probably say each one was doing something wrong. Yet, in the end it did all work out.

The first one didn't do what he was meant to—bring his load into the hole; he went backwards, while others worked.

The second one was impolite and pushy—he did what he was meant to, but stopped others from doing so.

The third just stood around, neither doing the job, nor choosing to be polite and give others a chance—he was just in the way for awhile.

Whatever way you look at it, you'll find fault. However, in the end the job did get done. How? By each one doing something different than the others. So if others are doing things wrong, at least that which seems wrong from your perspective, don't be too fast to criticise. Doing things differently might be what brings the positive end result, even if not all is orchestrated perfectly. Wait until the end, when the job you have all set out to do is done, before judging if things are right or not.

Maybe a little imperfection and zeal might be better than all standing politely around, discussing for hours how to do it perfectly; meanwhile the sun sets and the rest of the grain wasn't brought in to a safe place.

If someone is getting the job done, but not quite as you think it's best, be glad at least that you aren't having to carry twice as much of a load—theirs and yours. Be glad they are trying at least, in some way, to help out. In the end you'll probably forget about the imperfections, and rejoice that it all got done in time.