

The story is told of a wealthy man consumed by an insatiable desire to possess the stone of great price from God, no matter the cost. One day, he approached God with an unwavering determination. "God," he said, "I want to buy the stone of a great price from you?" God replied, "It costs everything. what do you have to offer?"

The man's confidence in his riches was palpable. "I have vast wealth and numerous possessions," he said. "I'll give them all to you." Without hesitation, he liquidated his assets, sold his properties, and returned to God. "Here, God, are all my possessions, my wealth. They're yours," he declared. "Now, may I have the stone of great price?"

But God responded, "No, I didn't say I'd give you the stone for your possessions alone. What else do you have to offer?" The man, taken aback, reluctantly admitted, "I have my family." God's response was unexpected: "I'll take them." The man's heart was heavy with sorrow, he departed, only to return a week later with family he loved and cared for.

"Here's my family, God," he said, his voice laced with sadness. "Now, where's the stone?" But God replied, "No, what you've given me is still not enough." The man's desperation grew. "I've given you everything - my possessions, my family...all that's left is my freedom." God said, "I'll take that too." The man's resolve crumbled. "It's too much, God. If I give up my freedom, I'll be nothing." God replied, "The stone's price is steep, but it's you who desires it. the choice is yours."

The man left, torn and uncertain. Days turned into nights, and he wrestled with his desire. Finally, he returned, his voice cracking, tears streaming down his face. "Okay, God, I will surrender my freedom to you." God, satisfied with the man's sacrifice, handed him the stone of great price. But in a surprising twist, God returned to the man his possessions, his family and his freedom. "Use them wisely," God said tenderly. "Remember, they're mine."

This story stands in stark contrast to the parable of the rich man who had a bountiful harvest (Lk 12:13-21). The rich man wondered what to do with his abundance, deciding to build larger barns to store his grains and goods, planning a life of leisure. But God had other plans, taking his life that very evening. Jesus concluded the parable with a stern warning: "Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God."

The rich man in the parable exemplified greed, hoarding his wealth for himself, neglecting the needs of others. In contrast, the man in our story learned a valuable lesson: the more he gave to God, the more he received in return. Our possessions are not ours alone; they're entrusted to us by God, But we are called to share with others especially those who are in need.

The rich man in the parable would have been better off sharing his harvest with his farmworkers who toiled to produce it. Instead, his greed led to his downfall, losing

everything in an instant. The man in our story, however, discovered that true wealth lies in surrendering to God's will, trusting in His presence. In the end, the story teaches us that possessions are not to be clung to for our exclusive use but to be shared with others in need. By letting go of our attachment to material wealth, we open ourselves to the true riches that come from God.