

I think we all might be envious of King Solomon  
and the opportunity that was his when the Lord told him,  
"Ask for what you want and I'll give it to you."

Suppose the Lord came to you in a dream  
and said the same thing...

For what would *you* ask?  
What comes first to your mind?  
What's at the top of your "wish list?"

It seems the Lord's offer had one string attached to it:  
he tells Solomon,  
"Because you asked for what you did,  
and not for some other things,  
I will give you what you asked for."

So there may have been things  
for which Solomon might have prayed  
but which the Lord would not have granted...

What came to *your* mind  
when I asked what you might ask for?

Do you suppose what you thought of might be a "match"  
on the Lord's list of requests to grant?

We ask for many things in prayer,  
and more often than not the things we pray for  
are very good things indeed -  
but the Lord does not send us all the good things we pray for  
even if our request seems what we think to be  
just what God would want to grant us.

Solomon asked for a *wise and understanding heart*:  
not so much a "thing" but more a way to discern, to discern:  
what's right from what's wrong,  
what's true from what's false,  
what's just from what's not,  
what's real from what's fantasy.

That desire to discern with a wise and understanding heart  
is the wisdom at work in the two parables in the gospel.

First there's the image of the treasure hunter

who, upon finding what she's been looking for,  
is willing to let go of everything else she owns  
for the joy of having what she has found.

Then there's the merchant in search of fine pearls.  
At last he comes upon the finest pearl he's ever seen  
and surrenders everything he has for it,  
believing this one pearl to be more valuable  
than anything else he might possibly possess.

How about us?

What treasure are you looking for in your life?

What treasure are you working hard for in your life?

What treasure do you spend your life saving up for?

In what treasure do we invest ourselves,  
our time, our resources?

The treasure we work for, whatever it might be:  
can it fulfill our hearts' deepest longing?

What "pearl," would be so valuable to our hearts' desires  
that we might surrender all we have to possess it?  
or half of what we have, or a quarter  
or even 10% of what we already have – often in abundance?  
Or do we hold on to and even hoard temporary treasure  
at the expense of treasure that is priceless?

Perhaps these scriptures are less  
about getting what I want or wish for  
and more about discerning, searching for what God wants for me:  
searching for the treasure God has planted in the fields of my life;  
for the pearl of great price, for which God hopes  
I might surrender much less valuable things in my life.

We can be sure of this:  
God desires our happiness  
and seeks to heal and reconcile the pain and burdens  
that keep us from peace of mind and heart.  
But in seeking that happiness  
most of us have to do a lot of digging  
before finding the buried treasure,  
and most of us sort through a lot of costume jewelry  
before discovering the pearl of great price.

Is any treasure greater, any pearl more valuable  
than the gift of faith which helps me to believe and trust in God  
when times are most difficult?

For each of us there is a treasure to be found,  
a pearl to be discovered.

What we need is a share of the wisdom of Solomon  
to pray, not for the fulfillment of fantasies and wishes  
but rather for the treasure, the pearl God has in store for each of us.  
It's in such wise prayer, as St. Paul wrote, that  
*all things do work together for the good, for those who love God.*

We are about to break open the treasure of the Eucharist  
and to pour out the Lord's wisdom by the cupful.

Pray with me that the sacrament of this table,  
for which Christ gave away everything he had - for us -  
that the sacrament of his sacrifice  
will nourish wise and understanding hearts in us all.

*- Rev. Austin Fleming*