

Parable of Two Travelers to the Mystical City

Two men were joined together in a search for a mystical city being directed only by an old map and a few words of encouragement from a friend who knew about the mystical city. The two men plus the third man symbolized a triangle where each was joined together with the others in an unbroken connection. Their quest to reach the mystical city lasted longer than expected and one of the men grew weary of their search. He began to have doubts about their ability to find the city. The other encouraged him to continue the journey and he did for a while longer, but by and by he decided that the journey was too much. He had plans to fulfill in his life and the time spent in their search for the mystical city was cutting into his plans.

As the men came to a place on the map that appeared to be the mystical city but proved otherwise, the wavering traveler terminated his search. To him the city was as good as the mystical city. As he looked around the city, he noticed the level of sophistication of the people, and he thought there was no better place for him to take up his abode than where he was. The triangle of fellowship among the three men became a broken figure.

The traveler who continued on the quest for the mystical city endured many trying circumstances but in due course of time, he found the city and was able to take up abode there. The city turned out to be everything and more that he had heard. The sharing, caring and loving attitudes followed by the deeds of the people of the mystical city did not go unnoticed by the travelers. He was touched by the active role of the government in encouraging the poor and the rich alike to participate in the welfare of the city. He remembered his friend had mentioned a man in the city with much knowledge, understanding and wisdom. As he searched for the man, he was given different accounts of his whereabouts but always with the caveat that he moved around a lot and that he should not be discouraged if he was not at the place shown him. His desire being strong, he searched the harder during his time off from managing a business he had established in the city. His business brought him into contact with many people especially travelers as he was an inn keeper.

By and by the traveler who quit the search began to have second thoughts about giving up the search. He longed for the fellowship that he once had with his fellow traveler. He looked at himself in the mirror one day, only to see a reflection of a drunken man, homeless and no money for his next meal. His desire to be with his friend became so strong until he left the city where he had taken up abode in search of the mystical city again. This time the search was made harder because he was alone, broke and without the map. To his credit, he had memorized much of the map. The first traveler also longed for the company of his fellow traveler. He wanted him to know the peace, joy and wealth he had obtained in the new city.

One day, a caravan of travelers checked into the inn and the inn keeper overheard a conversation between the leader of the group and a city dweller about a man they had met in a city who had lost all his money and was severely beating. In talking to the caravan leader, the inn keeper discovered that they come from the city where his fellow traveler has taken up residence. Not being sure how to get back to the city or even if he should leave to find his fellow traveler, he meditated over the matter. Determining that the right thing to do was to seek out his fellow traveler and assist him in his time of need, he pieced together information from the caravan leader and with what he remembered; he set out to find his fellow traveler by hiring a detective. He knew he could not leave the city because too many people depended on his services. By this time, he became a teacher and guide. People were amazed as to his knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the mystical city. Even he was not sure how he had gained the knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

It was not long before the detective found the weary traveler. By now he was suffering from several afflictions in his body. More than the body afflictions, he was lacking in peace and oppression was a regular occurrence. The detective told him that his friend had hired him to bring him to the mystical city. Upon hearing this news, he was both glad and sorrowful. He was glad to know his friend thought enough of him to search out his whereabouts, but sorrowful because he had fallen so low from the moral and ethical standards he once enjoyed. After inquiring as to the welfare of his friend, he told the detective that he did not feel worthy to go to the mystical city. It took some doing, but in the end, the detective was able

to convince him that his place was with his friend because he was part of a three-fold cord that could not be broken. The detective told him that even when he discontinued the journey to the mystical city, the place in his friend's heart was secure. Upon hearing this, the man consented to follow the lead of the detective as he guided him safely to the mystical city.

The detective and the man did not leave directly for the city, however. It took some time for the man to heal of his afflictions. Caring for the afflicted man, the detective learned much about what he had gone through during his stay in the city. Among things the detective learned was that the city had a reputation for corrupted officials and crimes against persons new to the city. He also learned that the man had been deceived into investing in a lucrative business venture with other investors. What looked good on the surface was in fact a Ponzi scheme. He started out with a nice return on his investment but in time he lost his life savings to the fraudulent scheme. When he sought justice from the authorities to retrieve his money, he ran into a brick wall. Some city dwellers said the police beat him. In due course, he lost his home and all his worldly goods.

Having healed sufficiently of his afflictions, the two men made it to the mystical city. Waiting at the gate was his friend who greeted him with open arms and a big, big hug. The traveler who had quit the search broke down in tears and began to say how sorry he was for what he had done. He asked his friend's forgiveness who in turn assured him that all was forgiven and that the past was buried and forgotten. Giving him a job at the inn and a room to live in his house, the once weary traveler became a very useful trustworthy employee. In time he became manager of the inn proving to be skillful with finances and getting along well with guests.

In the meantime his friend and owner of the inn continued his search for the missing mystical man but could not find him. When he had come to what he thought was his wits end, he met an old man who told him that the mystical man cannot be found in an outward search that just as he had found the mystical city by a sincere desire he would find the mystical man. That night he dreamt about his friend. In the dream his friend told him about two approaches to community building. One he said was an inclusive approach where respect for the rights and ways of life of others was prominent. The other was an exclusive approach where respect of persons because of titles, money, position, etc. was prominent. His friend told him in the dream that the city where he departed to find the "good life" was an example of a city that valued exclusive community building evidenced by their systematic attacks on newcomers to the city. He then told his friend that the mystical city valued inclusion and that long time dwellers of the city and newcomers alike treated fairly. When the man awakened out of sleep, he knew he had found the mystical man.