

A short story that has a great message.

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I found this story not too long ago and I felt it worth repeating. I hope it speaks to you and gives you pause to thought. Many blessings to you. Lynda

The Beggar and the King

Once there was a time, according to legend, when Ireland was ruled by a king who had no son. The king sent out his couriers to post notices in all the towns of his realm. The notices advised that every qualified young man should apply for an interview with the king as a possible successor to the throne. However, all such candidates must have these two qualifications: They must (1) love God and (2) love their fellow human beings.

The Young man about whom this legend centers saw a notice and reflected that he loved God and, also, his neighbors. One thing stopped him, he was so poor that he had no clothes that would be presentable in the sight of the king. Nor did he have the funds to buy provisions for the long journey to the castle. So the young man begged here, and borrowed there, finally managing to scrounge enough money for the appropriate clothes and the necessary supplies.

Properly attired and well-suited, the young man set out on his quest, and had almost completed the journey when he came upon a poor beggar by the side of the road. The beggar sat trembling, clad only in tattered rags. His extended arms pleaded for help. His weak voice croaked, "I'm hungry and cold. Please help me... please?"

The young man was so moved by this beggar's need that he immediately stripped off his new clothes and put on the tattered threads of the beggar. Without a second thought he gave the beggar all his provision as well. Then, somewhat hesitantly, he continued his journey to the castle dressed in the rags of the

beggar, lacking provisions for his return trek home. Upon his arrival at the castle, a king's attendant showed him in to the great hall. After a brief respite to clean off the journey's grime, he was finally admitted to the throne room of the king.

The young man bowed low before his majesty. When he raised his eyes, he gaped in astonishment. "You... it's you! You're the beggar by the side of the road."

"Yes," the king replied with a twinkle, "I was that beggar."

"But...bu...bu... you are not really a beggar. You are the king for real. Well, then, why did you do this to me?" the young man stammered after gaining more of his composure.

"Because I had to find out if you genuinely love God and your fellow human beings," said the king. "I knew that if I came to you as king, you would have been impressed by my gem-encrusted golden crown and my royal robes. You would have done anything I asked of you because of my regal character. But that way I would never have known what is truly in your heart. So I used a ruse. I came to you as a beggar with no claims on you except for the love in your hear. And I discovered that you sincerely do love God and your fellow human beings. You will be my successor," promised the king. "You will inherit my kingdom."

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