

Reflection & Prayertime: The Abundant Life

April 26, 2021

I have a close friend that adopted two young girls, ages 8 and 9, who'd been living in pretty precarious economic situations in their lives before their mother passed away, and they spent some time in an agency here in Louisville called Home of the Innocents for children needing emergency care while permanent care could be figured out. The girls felt some stability economically for maybe the first time in their lives and they were suddenly very attuned to people's economic situation. They began to talk about how they wanted to and would be rich some day.

My friend didn't want to squelch their economic ambition but also didn't want to affirm the idea that having lots of money always equated to being happy, although we all know and acknowledge that we are more content when there is not undue financial stress or worry. My friend talked it through with the girls about how her life felt really rich and even more so now that they had come into her life as soon to be legal family members and so they came up with a common jargon. If they were talking about the quality of someone's life they would say they were really rich and if they meant someone had a lot of money they said they were "loaded."

In the King James Version of the Bible in the book of John, Chapter 10, verse 10, Jesus says "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"; the New International Version says, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." I wonder what we all think abundant life or having life to the full means.

In September 2019, a colleague and I went to the GE Appliances Park to set up a booth for an employee volunteering fair where several agencies were setting up to tell GEA employees about their services and pitch their volunteer opportunities. A man approached us at the booth and began telling us of his experience with Volunteers of America 17 years ago and how he as a teenager and young adult was at a private school and headed to college but also heading down a path of addiction, seemingly with no exit ramp. He was in what was then called "Third Step" and he lived in the residential program at our Louisville Shelby Street facility. He began to tear up telling of how this program and the staff and clients there had absolutely saved his life and we were tearing up as well. Here is Casey Wagner sharing his story before he went on to become an engineer at GE Appliances:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yISAWSOifH8>

Part of what strikes me here is how Casey now has "everything he never wanted" and just how very happy he is with it. I believe Casey has found his abundant life and is living it out each day with health and strength and stability. I believe that although he had the economic means to be attending a private school and then college that he didn't have the richness of life and the joy that recovery is bringing, day in and day out.

Today I invite you to think about the abundance in your life that currently exists or that could be brought to more fruition and to reflect upon that. Are you able to recognize the abundance or are you only focused with being "loaded"? What in life brings richness to your life journey and what do you need to do to recognize the richness and abundance available to you? What step are you willing to take for the sake of more abundant living? For God's rich sustaining love that makes us beloved and rich, we are grateful; thanks be to God.