

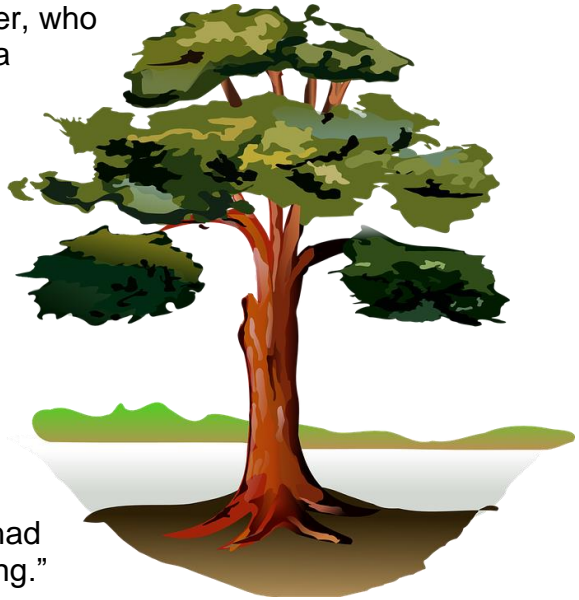
## Message in a Dream

Once upon a time, there was a proud man named Carl who loved to ride his horse through his vast estate, all the while congratulating himself on his enormous wealth.

One day, he came upon Hans, an old tenant farmer, who had just sat down to eat his lunch in the shade of a great oak tree. Hans' head was bowed in prayer. When Hans looked up, he said, "Oh, excuse me, sir, I didn't see you. I was giving thanks for my food."

"Hmmp!" snorted the rich man, noticing the coarse, dark bread and cheese that made up the old man's lunch. "If that were all I had to eat," he sneered, "I don't think I'd feel like giving thanks."

"Oh," replied Hans, "it's quite sufficient. But it's remarkable that you should come here today, because I feel that I have to tell you something. I had a strange dream just before awakening this morning."



"And what did you dream?" Carl asked with an amused smile.

The old man answered, "There was beauty and peace all around, and yet, I could hear a voice saying, 'The richest man in the valley will die tonight.'"

"Ah, dreams!" cried Carl. "Nonsense!"

He turned and galloped away, and Hans prayed as he watched the horse and its rider disappear.

"Die tonight!" mused Carl. "It's ridiculous! No use going into a panic." The best thing to do, he decided, was to forget the old man's dream.

And yet, he couldn't forget it. He had felt fine, at least until Hans described that crazy dream of his. Now he wasn't sure that he felt all that well. So, that evening, he called his doctor, who was a personal friend. He asked the physician to come over right away, for he had to speak with him. When the doctor arrived, Carl told him of the old man's dream, how the richest man in the valley would die this very night.

"Ah," replied the doctor, "sounds like poppycock to me, but for your peace of mind, let me examine you."

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A little later, the examination complete, the doctor was full of smiles and assurances. He said, "Carl, you're as strong and healthy as that horse you ride. There's no way you're going to die tonight."

The doctor was just closing his bag when a messenger arrived, out of breath, at the door of the manor.

"Doctor, doctor," he cried, "come quick! It's old Hans. He just died in his sleep!"

And so, true to Hans' dream, the richest man in the valley passed away.

For you and me, what constitutes riches in our lives? Is it measured by money or other material possessions? Is it determined by fame – as in a successful movie career or high government office?

Or can it be that the truly rich are those who have that close personal relationship with our Lord, and – as His children – receive the blessings He bestows, be they coarse, dark bread or the shade of a great oak tree?

It is a rhetorical question.

Jesus put it this way:

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter