

## *The Priest and the Poor Man*

A Catholic priest named Johannes Tauler tells of meeting a poor man along the road one day. "God give you a good day, my friend," said Tauler.

The poor man answered, "I thank God I never have a bad day."

Tauler, astonished, kept silent for a moment, then added, "God give you a happy life, my friend."

The poor man answered, "I thank God I am never unhappy."

"Never unhappy!" cried Tauler. "What do you mean?"

"Well," came the reply, "when it is sunshine, I thank God; when it rains, I thank God; when I have plenty, I thank God; when I am hungry, I thank God; and since God's will is my will, and whatever pleases me, why should I say that I am unhappy when I am not?"

Father Tauler looked upon him with awe. "Who are you?" he asked.

"I am a king," said the poor man.

"A king?" Tauler asked. "Where is your kingdom?"

The poor man smiled and answered simply, "In my heart."

The story is instructive for us. As followers of Jesus, we carry around a kingdom in our hearts. We are children of the Most High God. We are the recipients of God's promises and God's incredibly gracious love and mercy. If we really understand that, our joy will overflow.

If you want to be set free from your circumstances, your stresses and your worries, then follow the instructions God gave us to live in joy – replace worry with trust in God, develop a gratitude attitude, and focus your thoughts on those things that are pure, noble and excellent.

The God of peace will then be with you, and you will be able to then say with the Apostle Paul:

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* (Philippians 4:4 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter