

March 5, 2021 - Pastoral Letter

Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

The mythological story of King Midas serves as a warning for those who believe in easy riches. Even Aristotle, hundreds of years after the myth's origin, used this story as a lesson for his students—*be careful what you wish!*

Once upon a time, peasants found a drunken old man sleeping off his stupor in the king's royal rose garden. They dragged the old man from the thorny garden and brought him before King Midas, who recognized him immediately—the drunkard was the counselor of the king's good friend Dionysus, the mythological god of the vineyard. After graciously helping the old man to sober up and clean up, the king escorted him back home to Dionysus.

With great appreciation for the old man's return, Dionysus granted Midas the wish of his choice—anything the king wanted would now be his. Midas responded quickly—he wanted the ability to make gold, lots and lots of gold. "Give me the power to turn anything to gold simply by touching it."

... and the wish was granted.

In no time, the king was experimenting with his newfound ability. He touched an oak twig. Wham! It turned to gold. He touched a stone. Instantly, gold!

When Midas arrived back at the palace, he called for the servants to prepare a feast to celebrate his golden touch. As the sumptuous meal arrived, the king raised a cup of wine to offer a toast himself ... but the drink immediately turned to gold. He reached for the food, but that too suddenly turned to gold.

Then the king's daughter entered the room, angry that the recent visitor had ruined their rose garden. Midas reached out to comfort her, and ... she turned to gold.

Suddenly, King Midas hated his new gift. And, as Aristotle told his pupils, "Even though the king's greatest wish had been granted, he was all alone and died of starvation."

The glamor of Midas' golden touch was short lived and heartbreaking. No one can turn ordinary things to gold. No one, that is, except our God—and He's really good at it! In fact, God specializes in turning things into *better than gold*!

Of course, God's method of making things *better than gold* is far different than wishing for it. God's way is more personal and practical, and requires patience and endurance. But it's so worthwhile.

To make us *better than gold*, God uses trials. These trials serve as the acid test to prove the validity of our faith. When a believer finds himself going through trials, and then resurfaces from them while still clinging to and trusting the Lord, that's the proof that his faith is genuine. Proven faith, God says, "is more precious than gold."

Trials aren't difficult to find, they're a part of everyone's life. No one escapes them—including Christians. As the eloquent Eliphaz told Job, "Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." In other words, trials are guaranteed!

There's no safety net to keep us from trials, no spiritual vaccine to prevent us from getting them, no mountain top retreat where we can hide from them. Just as Sundays come whether we're ready or not, trials are a sure thing too ... whether we're ready or not.

So, how should we handle these trials that make us *better than gold*?

The solution comes from James: "Consider it all joy!" Really? That's the solution?

Peter offered some great notes on trials:

1. They don't last; they're only for a "little while."
2. They're "necessary" and serve a purpose.
3. Even during trials, believers can "greatly rejoice with inexpressible joy."
4. By enduring these trials, we literally bring our God "praise and glory and honor."

Therefore, instead of wishing our trials away, let's embrace them and "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Blessings, Pastor Lucero