

THE CARAVAN

Thrust of the Story

- *To create an awareness that life as a journey –occasionally a tough one.*
- *To accept the fact that life in this world is not free from hardships and sufferings.*
- *To find meaning in the difficulties and hardships of living..*
- *To trust in Christ our Leader and Guide who walks with us as we journey through life.*
- *To realize that as a pilgrim people we have to support one another along the way.*
- *To muster up the courage to go through life with joy, peace and hope.*

The Story

Narrator: Once upon a time, a long caravan was painfully making its way through a rocky desert. The guide was leading them through uncharted paths, and blazing trails. Everybody had an implicit faith in their guide. They entrusted to him their bodies and souls.

It was so unbearably hot during the day, that the guide decided to travel by night and snatch at least a few moments of sleep during the day under the thin shelter of their tents.

One night, after a long and arduous journey, all were weary and exhausted. They were negotiating a rocky and inhospitable terrain. Everbbody was longing for a little rest. Every step was so painful! All of a sudden; the voice of the guide broke the silence of the night...

Guide: Stop! Stop! Halt!

Narrator: At last, we shall have a little rest, all thought. But... not at all! The commanding voice of the guide was heard again:

Guide: As you can feel, we are moving over stony ground. These are my orders: Bend down, pick as many stones and pebbles as you can, fill your bags with them and make ready to carry them home. You have five minutes to follow orders.

Narrator: “What?” People grumbled: “To fill our bags with stones and pebbles! Is the guide gone mad? We can hardly carry ourselves, and now... he expects us to load ourselves with stones! What does he think of us? Are we beasts of burden? No! No! We shall not listen! We shall not obey his orders!” Only a few people in the caravan bent down, grumblingly picked a handful of stones and dumped them in their bags. Soon, the guide shouted.

Guide: Stand up! Ready! March!

Narrator: The long caravan began once more to crawl along the desert's pathless wastes. Only the shuffling of weary feet could be heard in the stillness of the night. They trudged and trudged and trudged, all the while wondering what the strange orders of their guide could have meant.

At dawn, the sun rose anew in the distant horizon, its rays dispelling the darkness of the long night. A new day began! The people pitched their tents and made ready to sleep. Those who had picked a few stones looked for them in their bags.

Lo and behold! They were glittering and sparkling with all the rainbow colors in myriads of hues and tinges reflecting the rays of the rising sun! They were precious gems! Sadness and gloom spread all over the camp. All lamented: O! If we only, had had the courage to follow orders and filled our bags with "stones"!

Ideas and Applications of the Parable

- Man's life is a long and arduous journey through the desert of life in which there are countless privations and hardships to endure.
- In life's journey we are heading for the Kingdom of God. We cannot pitch our tents on earth for ever.
- Where is that Kingdom? When shall we arrive there? It doesn't matter. It's enough to know that we are on the way there, that some day, somehow we shall reach there!
- It is faith and hope alone that will sustain us and help us to press forward, and not give up.
- We do not walk alone. We walk as people, the people of God leaning on one another. The Church is a pilgrim people following Christ, our Leader and Lord....
- He came into our world and entered our history to lead us on. Christ; the son of God, became man for us. He shares with us all our sorrows, frustrations and uncertainties.

- Christ is the ground of our faith and the anchor of our hope. Christ knows the destination. We have but to follow him and obey His orders.
- In the name of Jesus we have to plunge forward, taking in our stride the hurdles and setbacks that may come our way.
- Christ tells us to pick up his cross and follow Him, yet we grumble! Why? Have we not enough crosses of our own?
- We find it hard to see meaning in suffering, yet we have to take orders from our Guide and fill our "bags with crosses".
- On our final day, when we shall meet Christ - the dawn of eternal life - we shall discover the priceless value of crosses and sufferings..
- Everything will be transfigured; our crosses will turn into glittering and resplendent joys in the shores of eternity.
- Then, unfortunately, too late for many of us, we shall regret not to have picked our crosses with more joy and borne them gladly for the sake of Jesus.
- To sustain our courage God gives us, already in advance, from time to time, in this life, glimpses of his "Transfiguration", moments of intense joy.
- There is a hidden value in suffering, only those who discover it, will be ready to bear it. If we sow in pain we shall reap in joy.
- Pain and joy, death and resurrection are the two sides of the same coin. We cannot enter into the glory of the resurrection without having first shared in the sufferings of the crucifixion.

N. T. Quotes in keeping with the Ideas of the Parable

Mt 2/13-15	Flight into Egypt. (On a journey)
Mt 2/19-23	Return from Egypt. (On a journey)
Mt 5/10-12	Rejoice when they persecute you...
Mt 13/44-46	The Hidden Treasure. The Precious Pearl.
Mt 16/21-27	He who wants to save his life will lose it...
Mt 17/1-5	The Transfiguration.
Mk9/30-31	The Disciples cannot understand the doctrine of the Cross.
Mk10/32-34	Jesus explains the doctrine of the Cross.
Mk8/31-33	Peter remonstrates.
Lk 2/1-20	Birth of Jesus. In poverty, despised and in pain.
Lk 4/1-13	Temptations of Jesus. He spurned riches, honors and power.
Lk 5/1-10	In your name, Lord... Following orders.
Lk 12/13-21	The Rich Fool.
Lk 12/32-34	Riches in heaven.

Lk 24/13-35	Emmaus. Was it not necessary...
Jn 3/14-16	Nicodemus. "... the Son of Man has to be lifted up..."
Jn 12/27-33	Suffering brings glorification.
Jn 16/19-22	Pangs and joys of childbearing.
Acts 5/27-41	The disciples rejoiced that they had to suffer for Jesus.
Gal 6/14	I glory in the cross of Jesus.
Phil 3/8-11	I count all loss for the sake of Christ.
Rom 8/16-18	The sufferings of life cannot be compared with the...
2 Cor 4/10 & 17	The present tribulation works for us...
1 Pet 4/12-13	If we partake of the sufferings of Christ.