

The inner struggle against selfishness and egoism

Knowing the history of mighty empires, nations and states, we do know how much suffering and poverty may arise. How ephemeral is all power and wealth on earth! Our culture as well has arrived at a crossroads concerning its size and power.

Can the cycle of poverty and wealth ever be broken?

An ancient Jewish legend may give us a hint to how our life and work could look like on this planet:

"A rabbi once asked God for permission to see heaven and hell. God granted this wish to him and gave him the prophet Elijah as a guide. Elijah first led the rabbi into a large room in the center of which stood a pot with a delicious dish on a fire. All around it were people with long spoons and all drew from the pot. But the people looked pale, skinny and miserable. There was a deathly hush. The stems of their spoons were so long that they could not bring the delicious food into their mouths.

When the two visitors were back outside, the Rabbi asked the Prophet about this strange place. It seemed to be like hell to him.

Then Elijah led the rabbi into a second room, which looked just like the first. In the middle was a fire, on it cooking a delicious meal. People sat around it with long spoons in their hands.

But they were all well fed, healthy and happy. They talked animatedly. They did not try to feed themselves, but used the long spoon to serve food to each other. This room was heaven."

If we are constantly busy to care only for ourselves, doing everything to accumulate wealth and fortune just for us, we will lose the joy of being in community and the joy of life. Illness, unhappiness and suffering are the result of selfishness.

Not so, if a man learns to love his neighbor as he loves himself.

Since 2000 years, this law is known to us. In reciprocal service joy and contentment will flourish.

As much as selfishness - the "Just-for-me" attitude - vanishes, the power of love and charity will grow, and humanity will experience the love of Christ.

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