

**O Lord without love, whatever we do is worth nothing.
I speak to you in the name of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

Sandy, Secret, and Rocky all share one crucial characteristic: they are all famous squirrels.

Sandy is the squirrel from the cartoon *Spongebob Squarepants*. She lives under the sea in a special astronaut suit pursuing crucial scientific experiments. She is also the neighbor to Patrick the starfish.

Secret is the squirrel from that classic Saturday morning cartoon, *Secret Squirrel*. He's a secret agent who's a master of disguise and an expert in gadgets which are packed away in his trench coat and purple fedora.

Rocky is the flying squirrel from the cartoon *Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle*. With his best friend Bullwinkle, a moose, they ruin the evil plots of villains Boris and Natasha, who forever try "to catch moose and squirrel".

Whether an underwater scientist, a secret spy, or a superhero if stripped of everything, everything they all share the same squirrel tendency, hoarding acorns.

Every time the season changes from summer to fall that same old fear sets in, there won't be enough acorns. Their beady eyes sharpen and their teeny nose becomes ultra sensitive all in order to better scavenge.

Because now, at the center of everything, is the acorn. It's all consuming. Nothing else matters. Forget about the crucial science experiments. Forget about saving the world. Forget about defeating evil villains.

When the fear of not having enough overcomes squirrels, the acorn becomes life.

But are they really? Are acorns really life?

This is the question our scriptures invite us to contemplate today, what is at the center of our lives.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us the parable of the rich man:

"The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?'

Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'

Initially, this parable seems to simply condemn the abundance of crops, but parables are never that simple. Let's look again with a different lens.

The man asks, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?”

What if this question is not being asked out of arrogance, but being asked out of fear?

Like a fearful squirrel’s tendency is to hoard acorns, what if a fearful person’s tendency is to become possessive.

Thus the response, “I will pull down my barns, I will store my grains and my goods and I will say to my soul”.

Jesus isn’t using this parable to condemn abundance.

Jesus is using this parable to console us from our fears.

Because it’s out of fear that the crops become the center of our universe.

It’s out of this sense of not having enough that we forget the rest of the world.

It's this anxiety that tragically blinds us to the truth, blinds us to God's reality. And here is where find the good news.

Acorns are not life, Christ is life.

The good news is God's reality is not one of fearful scarcity. God's reality is one of total abundance. It's God's reality where we can rest from our fears because at the center of our lives is Christ.

Jesus is trying to convey that out of God's endless generosity, out of total abundance towards us, our lives are transformed to reflect God's love.

It's out of our gratitude for this gift that we are enabled to share God's abundance.

We don't have to rely on our own squirrelness, but rely on God's grace to work through each and everyone of us, endlessly centering our lives on Christ in order to be more like Christ in the world.

By God's grace, each and everyone of us is being guided into the people God created us to be. By being just as you are, God works to bring about the kingdom of God.

The good news is Christ is all and in all that's God's reality, and no matter what we do, there is nothing that can change that fact.

Yet, the question still stands. The question to consider is whether we are acting more like squirrels or working to share the gift of God's abundance?

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