



All About Plenty

The cornucopia, also known as the Horn of Plenty, is a decorative motif dating from ancient Greece that symbolizes abundance. Who doesn't like abundance? Who in their right mind wants to be in a state of constant want? "I've got plenty of nothing, and nothing's plenty for me," is okay as a George Gershwin song-and-dance line, but not as a philosophy of life. Bob Dylan once sang, "Too much of nothing just makes a fellow mean." Another musician came up with "Nothing from nothing makes nothing. You gotta have something, believe you me." So who wants nothing? Nobody. Unless you're dead.

All human activity, according to Bertrand Russell, is prompted by desire. Yet it is precisely here that our problems start. Okay, *some* desire is necessary to keep life in motion, but if we're truthful, we'll admit that our necessities are few and our wants are endless. Ricky Ricardo railed at his wife: "There you go again, wanting something that you haven't got!" Lucille Ball shot back: "I do not. I just want to see what I haven't got that I don't want."

Captain Kirk once told his *Star Trek* buddies: "There are a million things in this universe you can have, and there are a million things you can't have. It's no fun facing that, but that's the way things are."

Obviously there must be more to life than wanting to have it all. Five'll get you ten if we got everything we wanted, we'd still manage to be miserable. Marilyn Monroe once said of the industry: "They'll pay you \$50,000 for a kiss and 50-cents for your soul." Unwittingly MM paraphrased an ironic statement Jesus told an audience 2,000 years ago: "What good is it to gain the whole world and forfeit your soul?"

Jesus understood how easily our needs deteriorate into greeds: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for a person's life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions" (Luke 12:15). Does that mean he is merely preaching against money and advocating austerity? Hardly.

When Jesus said, "I've come to give life, and life more abundantly," he wasn't talking like a delusional crackpot, for he called God his own Father, and made himself equal with God. "I tell you the truth. Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24). Anybody else making this kind of claim would be heading for a padded cell. The Messiah described himself in this unique way: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

Want the very essence of life? This is what God wants you to do: Believe in the one he has sent. From his Horn of Plenty we find life now *and* life after life.