

Be Careful What You Wish For

I'm currently reading *Metamorphoses* by Ovid. It's a collection of ancient Roman poetry—some short, some long—but man, there are so many to dive into. It's actually overwhelming, but so beautiful and elegant to read casually, and I've been taking my time with it.

The most recent story I recall is of King Midas. You've heard of that idea—the Midas touch? I've always known the saying: everything he touches turns to gold. But I never actually read the myth itself. It's pretty powerful when you finally find the source of these modern-day sayings or archetypes that stand the test of time.

Don't Follow Your Desire?

King Midas wished upon the god he worshipped, Bacchus (Dionysus), that everything he touched would turn to gold. He desired wealth and material treasures on this earthly plane. However, once his wish was granted, he realized its fatal flaw.

When he went to eat bread, it turned to gold dust. When he tried to drink wine, the glass shattered into gold. He could not even nourish himself. Now that his wish had been granted—now that he followed his desire—it became a curse. He then pleaded for it to be taken away and washed the curse away in a river.

The moral of the story: Be careful what you wish for.

Midas then despised wealth and luxury, and went to worship the simple, rustic god who played the pipes—Pan. However, in judging a music competition between Pan and Apollo, Midas said that the pipes were better. Because of this, Apollo punished him by giving him donkey ears.

Midas was simply being a contrarian, avoiding the true beauty of Apollo's performance out of pride and arrogance.

The moral of the story: Foolish pride leads to disgrace.

Choose Wisdom

In *Aladdin*, there's a scene where he enters the mouth of a snake—the Cave of Wonders. Inside, he's surrounded by shining treasure and material riches. But there's one rule: **if you take anything but the chosen treasure, you'll be trapped inside forever.**

Despite the temptation, Aladdin chooses correctly. He doesn't grab at the gold. He chooses the **lamp**—the vessel of the **genie**. And through the genie, he is granted a deeper kind of power: **wisdom**, transformation, freedom.

Choose the genie in the bottle. **Choose wisdom** over the illusion of wealth. Don't be tricked by glittering surfaces. True treasure is the wisdom that sets you free.

Would You Rather Be a Docile Donkey or a Lion?

If you had to choose between being a docile donkey and a lion, wouldn't you rather be the ferocious lion?

Think of a lion and the way it lives its life—chilling out on the hill, basking in the sunlight, using its physical powers. The lion is the king. The lion, full of vitality, goes for its hunt and then spends the rest of the day with its pack, its tribe. Lions don't need to move too fast. They can chill out because of their grandeur, their excellence, their strength.

I remember riding a donkey in Jericho. They truly are a pain in the ass... ha ha. Every time you try to ride, it would knock you off. It's almost like you had to put a carrot on a stick just to keep it moving. They don't like being ridden. You have to butter them up, give them treats, and make them docile so they obey.

Now use this as a metaphor for modern-day man—living a mostly sedentary lifestyle, with comfortable environments, Uber Eats at our disposal, unlimited food options, and endless entertainment. It's very easy to become a docile donkey. But it's very difficult to become a lion.

The more difficult path—towards vitality—will ultimately lead to freedom. The easy path—towards mediocrity—leads to slavery.

While Jesus is often seen as the sacrificial lamb, when he's mentioned as **the Lion of Judah**, it provides a powerful metaphor and blueprint to live by. Yes—sacrifice, suffering, and pain are necessary for growth. But one must also find **vitality** and **thrive through chaos**, becoming the lion.

Humans Are Like Wells

When I spent time in Zambia, Africa, as a Peace Corps volunteer working in fish farming, I remember the center of the village had two things: a church, and a well.

Every morning, families gathered with buckets on their heads to bring home water for the day. Without the well, there would be no village. Without this source of vitality, there would be no nourishment for the tribe.

To dig these wells, you have to start in a very particular location. You can't just plop a well down anywhere—you must dig with intention to tap into the source. A good well is always connected to the source. It takes work and effort to dig deep.

Not only does the well provide physical vitality, but the **church** at the center offers spiritual nourishment. By gathering at the church, the tribe strives upward, toward the divine.

What I'm still most blown away by, in comparing the United States to Zambia, is that the people are **so much happier**.

How are people in these rural villages happier than Americans—despite having to draw water from a well?

We have tap water at our fingertips, Uber rides, food delivery, and endless entertainment. Yet, I believe we lack **spiritual vitality**.

These villages gather in church, filling themselves with **spiritual vitality through Christ**, and they shine. You feel their energy. It's palpable.

So, perhaps the **church is the true source**. And when I think of Jesus's saying—*"The kingdom of heaven is within you"*—it really rings true.

Your perception shapes your reality.

If you're full of anxiety, depression, or negative thoughts—you're creating **hell within**. Physical and mental weakness leads to spiritual weakness.

But through digging—through suffering, strife, and struggle—you tap into the source. You tap into Christ.

Then you become **nourished spiritually**, which overflows as **vitality**. You become like a **well full of love** that pours out onto others.

Now that you're tapped into the source—Christ—nothing can break your spirit or lust for life.

Your body becomes a **cathedral**, a **temple**, and a **well**—overflowing with abundance, for others to drink from.

A Goblin With Gold Is Still a Goblin With Gold

Let's do a thought experiment.

There is a king sitting atop a castle, surrounded by infinite luxury, goods, and pleasures. Yet he is obese, ugly, and weak. He doesn't go outside. He has everything the material world could offer—but he's not truly happy.

He still clings to desire. Still wants more. All his treasure piles up, but he lacks joy and peace.

Meanwhile, a **barefoot sage** frolics in the garden outside the castle walls. He tends the land and gardens each day, cultivating crops for the king. The barefoot sage is **joyful**, full of vitality, basking in the sun, smiling at the sunrise. He doesn't have much, but he's alive and grateful.

Would you rather be the barefoot sage or the goblin with gold?

A **goblin with gold** is still just a goblin—with endless desire but no contentment, peace, or joy. So choose the source, not the surface—live like the lion, dig like the well, and let your spirit overflow.