

The Miser

“Store up; for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal” Matthew 6:20

The novel *Silas Marner* by George Eliot tells the story of a man who was once a well-respected member of a small religious community called Lantern Yard. He is engaged to a young woman and believes that his future happiness is well assured. However, when he is betrayed by a fellow parishioner and blamed for a crime that he did not commit, Marner is forced to leave the community. To add to his suffering, he later learns that his former fiancée has married the man who betrayed him.

Marner settles in the town of Raveloe and vows to never let anyone cause him such pain again. He becomes a recluse and a miser whose sole source of happiness is counting out his gold each night before hiding beneath the floorboards of his bed. He is so protective of his gold that he often checks on it just to make sure that it is still there and so fearful of losing it that he turns away anyone who comes to his door.

One day while Marner is out, a thief breaks into his home and steals away his hoard of gold. Marner falls into a deep depression and is so distraught at the loss of his precious treasure that he can barely conceive of how he will continue on in life. The solution comes in an unusual way; a golden-haired child one day suddenly appears on his doorstep. Marner has no idea who the child's parents are or what he should do, so he is forced to step outside of his four walls and seek the advice of his neighbors in the community.

Marner grows to love the little girl and learns to accept the kindness of those around him. Slowly, he lowers his defenses and allows others to enter into this life. As he does so, he finds the pain he felt over the loss of his stolen gold begins to diminish as well. “Thought and feelings were so confused within him,” Eliot writes, “that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could have only said that the child was come instead of the gold—that the gold had turned into the child.”

Have you ever thought you really needed something and when you finally got it you soon grew tired of it? I have talked to MKs that wanted to be back in the US and then some other ones that wanted to be on the field. Some people just don't know how to be content. True contentment, as Marner discovered, comes not by hoarding money and possessions but by loving others and sharing our lives with others. You have a chance to give of yourself to others daily through ministry. Don't hoard the talents that God has given you!