



REFLECTIONS

July 15, 2012

**For where your treasure is, there your heart
will be also.**

Matthew 6:21

Bedouin Woman

Laughter only broadened the radiant smile across her face, and cheerfulness answered any question of regret about her chosen life. Sequins sparkled across the front of the colorful dress that matched perfectly with the luster of her personality. But neither the beam of her smile nor the brilliance of her clothing suggested that possessions were important to her. What more was there to need?

The presence of this stately, well proportioned matron, commanded center stage. A slight hint of aging painted wisdom in her eyes, and the shawl covering her head exposed just enough dark silver-streaked hair to accent the olive complexion toughened by the open air that she called home. The desert she chose as her land and the dark grey tent as a dwelling place displaced any desires for material things. The life she chose satisfied her needs.

We encountered the Bedouin woman after a long, hot, and dusty walk down a rugged ancient road that led us to a refreshment stand in a place called Petra. With strength drained, our tired and weary bodies welcomed relief from the heat; and the fresh squeezed orange juice, minted lemonade, and other refreshments restored our vitality. But the cheerfulness of the Bedouin woman captured the moment and personified the hospitality that welcomed us to a culture that until then we had seen only from a distance.

Bedouins are noted for their hospitality not their belongings. They are found herding sheep or goats along dusty trails, and living in black colored tents pitched on sandy ground or in caves carved into the sandstone hillsides that extend through the desert of the Middle East. We felt the desert's bareness, but Bedouins feel its riches—not for possessions provided from it, but for the joy they can bring to it. And perhaps we find a message there.

Possessions can become a form of keeping score and the pursuit of them unending. But as material things increase it is curious to wonder if we have come to possess them, or they come to possess us.

The Bedouin woman evidenced no hint of Christian faith, but maybe she had something right. The greatest treasures are not the material things. She treasured a desert life after all. From there she brings cheer and hospitality to groups of hot, weary travelers that add to treasured memories of a place called Petra—memories that can last a lifetime.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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