

JACK AND THE BEAN STALK

Final Week of a 4-Week Series, "Metaphysical Fairy Tale Fun"

Rev. Stacy Macris Ros

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Well everyone, this is our final week in our four-week summer series, "Metaphysical Fairytale Fun," where we look and find these spiritual lessons for our lives through these childhood stories that we've had. Now, if you've missed any, of course, you can go to our YouTube channel and you can go back and watch "Little Red Riding Hood"; "Goldilocks and the Three Bears"; and "Hansel and Gretel" was last week.

Tonight, I'm going to cover "Jack and the Bean Stalk." And it was originally titled "The Story of Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Bean." That's a long name, isn't it? Written in 1734.

And I think one thing that we've learned from these stories is that they're pretty gruesome and scary, aren't they? Yeah, not unlike the Old Testament. Umm ... [Congregants laugh] But, in both cases, they're stories that we can take, you know, a positive spin. You know, put a positive spin on them for our life. Carry forth some positive. life lessons from them.

So, I always like to start by telling the story; reading the story first so it's fresh in our minds ... because childhood was just, you know, a couple years ago for most of us. So, let's start with the story, "Jack and the Bean Stalk."

Once upon a time, there lived a poor widow and her only son, Jack. One morning, with no money left, Jack's mother sent him to market to sell their cow. On the way, Jack met a curious old man who offered him five magic beans in exchange for the cow. The man swore they would bring Jack great fortune.

Trusting the promise, Jack handed over the cow and ran home with his prize. When his mother saw the beans, she was furious. "You foolish boy," she cried. "You traded our only cow for a handful of nonsense?" She threw them out the window, and Jack went to bed hungry and discouraged.

The next morning, Jack looked out the window and gasped. Overnight, the beans had sprouted into a towering bean stalk that reached all the way to the clouds. Trembling with wonder, he began to climb higher and higher until he reached a strange kingdom in the sky. There he found a great stone house and met the wife of a fearsome giant. Seeing that Jack was hungry, she gave him bread and milk.

Suddenly, the house began to shake. The giant was coming home! Jack hid as the giant roared, "Fee-fi-fo-fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

[Congregants laugh] Do we remember that part? Gruesome.

Well, the giant searched but found nothing and, after eating, he counted a sack of gold coins and soon fell asleep. Jack quietly took the gold and climbed back down the beanstalk. His mother wept with joy. They could live well for a time!

Yet greed and curiosity soon returned. Jack climbed that beanstalk again back to the giant's house. Once more, the giant's wife showed him kindness and, once more, he hid when the giant arrived. "Fee-fi-fo-fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make me bread!"

"Well, don't be ridiculous," said his wife.

This time, Jack watched in amazement as the giant ordered a hen to lay golden eggs. So, when the giant fell asleep, Jack took the magical hen and escaped down the bean stalk.

His mother warned him never to return again, but Jack could not resist one final adventure. Climbing to the giant's castle once more, he discovered a beautiful golden harp. It played music all by itself, and so Jack picked it up. The harp suddenly cried out, "Help, master! A boy is stealing me!" The giant awoke with a roar and chased Jack to the bean stalk.

Down Jack scrambled with the harp in his arms, faster than ever before, with the giant close behind. As Jack's boots hit the ground, he shouted to his mother, "Bring me the axe!"

He seized it and swung with all his might, chopping at the bean stalk. Wood splintered and vines tore until the enormous stalk cracked in two. With a final thunderous crash, the giant plunged from the sky, dead where he fell.

From that day on, Jack and his mother lived in comfort and peace, their hearts full of gratitude and awe for the strange adventure that had changed their lives forever. The end.

That was a good Wednesday night story, wasn't it, everybody? I mean, it's quite an adventure. [Laughs]

So, as I reading that story, three things came to my mind that I thought we could dive deeper into tonight

One: I think one of the spiritual lessons we get from this is that going after our dreams can be scary, but don't let others and don't let our own voice discourage us.

Two: I think be grateful for what we have. Gratitude is a spiritual practice, and it actually brings us into alignment with what we want to manifest, which then allows us to manifest even more.

And three: at any time, we can chop down the thoughts and behaviors that get in the way of living our best life.

So, you ready to dive in – or, rather, climb up -- the beanstalk together?

Okay; here we go. **The first lesson from the story: GOING AFTER OUR DREAMS CAN BE SCARY, BUT DON'T LET OTHERS OR YOURSELF DISCOURAGE YOU.**

So, at the beginning of the story, we hear that Jack and his mother are poor and they're desperate. But Jack believes in the magic he IS sold and believes great things are going to come from them. And his mother calls the beans "a handful of nonsense." So, she doesn't have the same level of faith that Jack does.

So, the beans I see like seeds. Right? A seed of an idea. We might have a seed of a goal or a dream that we want to plant and see grow. And we're excited about it. And we have faith that it's going to grow and it's going to bring us riches or a rich life or enhance our life in some way.

But then there's others in our life -- or in society at large -- and they discourage us. They tell us, "Hey, stick to your five senses -- your five 'beans'." Right? "Believe in the practical. Believe in only what you can see or touch, taste, hear." Right? The five senses.

But in the story, Jack is, quote, "trusting the promise." And so we, too, must trust the promise that magic -- or manifestation -- can have on our lives. The promise that manifestation is possible.

So, Charles Fillmore, Unity's co-founder, said all the way up to his death, "The greatest teaching ever given is: 'Christ in you the hope of glory.'" Now, in Unity, we interpret Christ to mean that divine potential in you; that divine spark of light in you.

So really what we're saying is: because you're a manifestation of the divine -- because you're pure light -- you can demonstrate beautiful, amazing things in your life. Whatever you want to create, you can create, because we're creative beings. We're creating all the time.

So, it's up to you what you want to choose to create. Because we're creating all the time! Not just art and creative things. We're creating our lives. We're manifesting all the time! And all of creation comes from the manifestation process, and it's a three-step process. So just like Jack went up the beanstalk how many times? Three times.

And so, in Unity, we look at manifestation and these three steps as: Divine Mind or Infinite Intelligence; and then Idea; and then the Expression.

So, manifestation starts with a thought: *"Well, what if I trade this cow for beans?"* And it's about listening to our spiritual wisdom, our spiritual intuition, because that's our connection with the Divine. I think in Little Red Riding Hood I mentioned our "GPS" -- our God Protection System. But that's our intuition. That's Divine Mind: God. Our God connection.

So, it starts with being connected to and really being open to listening to that divine wisdom or intuition.

And then we have an idea. That's the second step of manifestation. *"Hmm. What if I trade this cow and beans?"*

And then the third step in manifestation is taking the action on that idea. And so, then the idea grows to fruition. So by throwing the beans -- this is an action, right? We take the action. We throw our ideas and turn those ideas into an action. We take action on the ideas. And then a magical bean stalk -- or our prosperity, our ideas -- grow.

And I can imagine, too, that the climbing of that very, very, very tall bean stalk to the sky must have been scary. In fact, it says he was *"trembling with wonder."* And a lot of times when we're going after our goals and our dreams and what we want to accomplish in our life, it can be really ... We can be full of awe and wonder, and it can be scary. But it's up to us whether or not we're going to let our fears stop us from going up the stalk; going up after our dreams or not.

Or if we're going to let the voices within us -- and those fears -- if we're going to let them keep us grounded and not accomplishing our goals and dreams. Or if we're going to let other people and their limited thinking or their doubts and fears stop us from accomplishing our goals and dreams.

But to manifest what we want, our thoughts, along with our feelings and our beingness -- our entire being -- must be fully focused on what we do want. Not on what we don't want, but on what we do want.

So, Rev. Eric Butterworth, one of Unity's most famous ministers/authors: in "Spiritual Economics" he writes: *"In most cases you would respond, 'I only earn ...' 'I only have ...' 'I am only worth ...'"* He says, *"Why the 'only'? Regardless of what you have, your thoughts are subtly centered in what you do not have with the subconscious fear that you do not have enough."*

And that was Jack's mother, wasn't it? She was limited in her thinking of what was possible. And if they had followed her and her fear of that "nonsense," they would have stayed poor. They wouldn't have had all the riches.

So, grow your abundance, grow your desires in any area of your life -- in all areas of your life -- by staying focused on what you want. Don't let other people discourage you. Don't let your own fears and worries discourage you. Take action -- movement -- towards your goals. Don't just sit there and pray and hope. We've got to put our feet to our prayers and do the work that makes your goals come to life.

Plant the seeds. Climb the beanstalk. Watch it come to life. That's our first lesson.

The second lesson from the story: **BE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT WE HAVE, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE OUR ABUNDANCE GROWS.**

So often -- and I think social media adds to this these days -- a lot of times we think we're the only ones struggling. or we're the only ones that aren't ... you know, other people are doing better than we are. Whether it's financially or with our health or with relationships or life experiences, a lot of times we have this "FOMO" mentality -- fear of missing out -- or we think everyone's doing better than we are.

But really, when we focus on gratitude, our gratitude grows and becomes the prosperity of our lives.

So, Jack's greed and curiosity keeps returning. his "not-enoughness." There's not enough. He keeps thinking about the giant having more gold than he has. And even when he gets some gold, he still feels like he doesn't have enough gold.

And what's interesting here, too, is that in Unity's 12 spiritual powers, or attributes, we see gold being aligned with that spiritual attribute or quality of understanding: spiritual understanding. Our spiritual knowledge. And it's our spiritual understanding that helps us realize that we have a wealth. We have wealth within us already! We have wealth around us already. We have a wealth of ideas that can lead to even more prosperity or abundance. We have a wealth of friends and family. We have a wealth of health. What is our body doing for us, right?

Where do we want to put our focus?

And that's really what a gratitude practice is about: knowing that, wherever our focus is -- wherever we place our focus, that's what's going to grow. So where are you placing your focus? On enough or not enough? And, again, that could be money. It could be, "*There's not enough love in my life or friends in my life*" or, "*I'm not smart enough*" ... whatever that "enoughness" is. But shifting the focus to gratitude and the abundance that you do have in your life; in all areas of your life.

And I'm telling you, keep a gratitude journal. A gratitude journal will change your life. It's nice to say some gratitudes at the end of the day. But a gratitude journal took me from the dark night of the soul experience to healing. Why? Because every day I told myself I had to put down at least three things I was grateful for. And I couldn't repeat it. And then I'd go back and read it and I'd add more. And at the lowest moments, I'd add more. It's about going back and seeing your list grow.

In her book, "How to Let God Help You," Unity co-founder Myrtle Fillmore writes this. She says, "*Never condemn anything in your home. If you want new articles of furniture or clothing to take place of those which may be at the point of giving out, do not talk about what you have as being old or shabby. Watch your ideas. See yourself clothed as befits a child of the Divine.*"

And then Plato. More than 2,500 years ago, Plato wrote, "*A grateful mind is a great mind which eventually attracts itself to great things.*"

And, again, from Eric Butterworth in "Spiritual Economics": "*Giving thanks is an important state of your consciousness that keeps you in an awareness of oneness with divine flow.*"

See, like Jack, we must allow our thoughts and our gratitude practice to rise up beyond the human senses to our spiritual understanding of spiritual truth.

And, you know, in Unity, the first primary symbol that was used was that of a winged globe. We have it here. Here's that winged globe. It was used in publications. It was used around Unity Village, where the headquarters are, because ... It was to remind us to raise our thinking to a higher level: above earthly matters; beyond the physical; and to see with a higher view; to see with our spiritual eyes.

Charles Fillmore saw it as that reminder that, *“Spirit energizes the soul, allowing it to rise above earth and the thoughts of matter,”* as Fillmore put it.

So be like Jack. Climb higher. Climb higher in your view of life. Climb higher in your view of your abilities. Climb higher in your goals. And I would even say to climb higher and see with your spiritual eyes by asking yourself: What is my soul here to do? Or how can I be the Divine in the world? How can I express more loving awareness? How can I express the presence of the I AM that I AM? How can I use my spiritual understanding to be that in the world?

Because it's when we raise our thoughts to the spiritual truth of understanding that we can see more clearly what our riches truly are. So, gratitude is a spiritual practice. And, as a spiritual practice, it helps get us there; raises us up.

And another thought on gratitude, as well. The giant's wife gave Jack food. And I take this as a reminder that, when we give to others, they grow in riches too. It actually doesn't take away from us. They still had plenty of gold. Jack had food and nourishment.

So, to give to other people, it may be a job connection. It might be emotional support. It might be kindness. Maybe it is food or money. But when we give -- when we give -- our abundance grows. It's the Law of Prosperity. It's the Law of Life itself: that we have to have an outflow and an inflow; an inflow and outflow. That's the prosperity consciousness.

We live in a limitless, abundant universe. There is enough for everyone. So, we don't need to hoard our wealth. And, again, wealth can be kindness; wealth can be friends; or wealth can be actual money. But, in giving it freely, it allows for the natural flow of prosperity.

Here's what Eric Butterworth writes: *“If ever there is lack of any kind -- whether it is a need for employment or for money or for guidance or even for healing -- something is blocking the flow. And the most effective remedy is to give.”*

He says, *“The law is exact. If you give and really work in a giving consciousness, you must receive.”* As we give, we receive.

Gratitude is a spiritual practice that brings us in alignment with that which we want to manifest, and allows it to grow even larger and even bigger than we can even imagine. That was lesson two.

Lesson three from the story: Even if we find ourselves in the chaos of our own making ... Because, let's be honest with each other. Jack created his own chaos. Right? He brought this on himself. And we can do that, too. It could be our monkey mind. It could be our behaviors.

But at any time, at any time, we can choose to cut down the old beliefs. We can choose to cut down the old ways of thinking, the old habits – especially the ones that cause us suffering, chaos, self-sabotage. We can cut those down at any time of our choosing.

And so, metaphorically, what Jack is really cutting down is that idea that he needs to steal from another to gain spiritual understanding and insight. The belief that he doesn't have enough and, therefore, he has to take more.

And he destroys the giant -- that giant being that fear, the anxiety, the doubt that we have. That loud voice of fear within us that feels like it might eat us up.

So, instead of letting your fears run after you, you can stop them in their tracks. And you do this by no longer holding on to old ideas, old beliefs, anything that doesn't serve you anymore. Anything that in no way improves your life. You can stop those at any time! You can chop down the negative self-talk. Chop down the negative thoughts. Chop down the unhealthy patterns that cause you chaos and suffering.

And I just saw this post by author/podcaster, Emmanuel Acho. And he shared something that his therapist shared with him. It's a great quote. Ready for it? It says, *"Stop punishing yourself for a decision you made yesterday based on the information you have today."* Stop punishing yourself for a decision you made yesterday based on the information you have today.

So, the initial information that Jack had was that there's riches to be found. The five beans were going to bring him riches. But then the new information is that there's an angry, mean, hungry giant that's going to come after him. And so, he goes down and then he chops the bean stalk.

So, with this, I take: extend compassion to yourself. Whether it's a job or a relationship -- whatever didn't work out -- based on the information that you had at that time, it was the right decision.

So, our third lesson is: **YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CUT OFF WHAT IS NO LONGER SERVING YOU TO YOUR GREATEST GOOD AT ANY TIME.**

I love taking these stories of yore and finding meaning for my life today: today in 2026. Many of them come from anywhere from the 1300s to the 1700s. And yet, we can pick out these life lessons that apply to us now.

So, from "Jack and the Bean Stalk," we learn going after our dreams can be scary, but don't let others or yourself discourage you. Be grateful for what you have because that's where your abundance grows. At any time you can chop down the thoughts and behaviors that get in the way of you living your best life.

And in the end, here's what's really interesting. In the end, in taking the adventure -- in being brave -- Jack and his mother's lives are changed for the best. Better than they could have ever imagined! And that's my hope for all of you: that you will dream the dream; don't let fear or outer voices get in your way; take the climb; and be grateful along the way. And watch your riches, and the riches of your life, grow.

And that concludes our metaphysical fairy tale fun, everyone. Thank you and blessings.