

## *A Look to Remember*

Miriam picked up a needle from where it had fallen on to the stone floor. She held it and looked at it for a moment. *'I'm still not sure I understand what the Master was talking about yesterday. I wouldn't like to have to push a camel through the eye of this needle!'*

*'But that was the point...'* Nathan began

*'No not the point ..... the other end.'* Miriam was quick to see the pun.

Nathan sighed patiently. *'Jesus meant that it is impossible for rich people to get into the Kingdom unless they're ready to give up their riches.'*

*'So the Kingdom's only for poor people!'* Rebekah was standing in the open shop doorway and joined in the conversation. She always did.

*'No, of course not.'* Nathan had that simple uncomplicated faith which soon lost patience with people like Rebekah - people who want truth in neat little bundles. *'But you can't put God first when anything else is at the centre of your life. So if your riches mean more than God, you can't have the Kingdom. It's simple.'*

*'Did you see his face?'* Miriam did not want these two siblings to get into an argument just now in her shop. It was bad enough at home, but there were customers to think of here.

*'Yes, I saw his face.'* Rebekah missed very little of what happened in the village. *'Who was he anyway?'*

*'You mean that patronising fellow who made a show in front of Jesus and asked him about having eternal life.'* said Nathan. *'He was a total stranger to me. Some prosperous trader I expect who's made a fortune out of the likes of us.'*

*'I didn't mean him.'* Miriam carried on folding the curtain material she had been sewing. *'Yes, that man was a trader. He was passing through and a whole band of men with him. They were taking cloth down to the city. He tried to sell me some. He had some of the most beautiful linen I've seen anywhere. It was no use to me though. I could never ask his prices here.'*

*'His face was a picture,'* Rebekah took up the theme. *'I've never seen such a gloomy look in a long time. Not since our Asher had his whole week's wages stolen when he stopped to help a stranger who'd fallen in the road. It a set-up, and he fell for it.'*

*'He looked worse than gloomy,'* Nathan said. *'That young man thought he could have the Kingdom of God in the same way he's got all his worldly fortune. He had a shock though when Jesus told him he had to sell up and give everything away to the poor. He was more than gloomy. He was reeling like he'd been in a fight and felt a fist full on his jaw. Jesus keeps telling us you have to give up things if you're going to put God first. The fellow couldn't do it. It was probably the first time he'd ever wanted something he couldn't earn or buy.'*

*'And what have you given up for God ?' Rebekah was at him again. Once more Miriam stalled an argument.*

*'When I asked if you had seen his face I was talking about Jesus. Did you see **his** face? Did you see the way he looked at the trader ?*

*'Can't say I did,' replied Rebekah. ' I was watching that man. I felt so sad for him.'*

*'I saw him.'* Leah came out from between the hanging folds of material where she had been quietly working and listening. *'I couldn't take my eyes off him. His face was.....well...full of pain....of love....of forgiveness....It was a though he felt all the sadness of that man's heart, and you could almost see him aching for all that the man was giving up.'*

*'But he didn't give it up,' said Rebekah.*

*'Not his riches,' Leah continued. 'I think he gave up much more than that. He turned his back on eternal life - on all the love and peace ... all the happiness we've begun to discover with Jesus.' She looked round at the bundles of cloth. 'I may never work with the finest silks and linens, or own my own shop, but since Jesus came I have riches I wouldn't exchange for any of that. I'll tell you something. I wouldn't want Jesus ever to look at me in the way he looked at that young man.'*

Rebekah felt embarrassed by the silence that followed Leah's gentle outburst. *'I'd better look out for a camel-sized needle, or a needle-sized camel.'* She had to say something.

Miriam and Nathan exchanged looks which clearly said, *'You have to believe everything is possible when you're trying to get through to Rebekah !'*