

Baby Polar Bears

Value: Helping the Poor

The one thing Pudgy and the older baby polar bears he played with loved to do is explore. Sometimes their moms and dads let them go out in a pack and explore the many coves and hills that made up their beautiful polar world. They made sure to stick together mostly but often split up in small packs of two to explore several coves at a time. That often turned into a game of hunt and catch with the smaller packs attacking each other playfully and wrestling and sometimes falling into the frigid ocean as they played. They loved the cold water and it made them even more playful.

Pudgy really liked being with his friends, Boris, Hector and Philippe and playing all day while the adults did whatever it is that adults do. One day they had found a whole area of coastline that they had not explored so they were very excited. Suddenly as Pudgy and Boris were playing tag in the water, they heard Hector yell out with excitement "HEY LOOK WHAT I FOUND!"

All of the baby bears ran as fast as they could to his voice. Pudgy's feet kept slipping on the ice and he would bounce on his fat belly and then get up but he was used to that. That was how he ran. All of them stopped and just gasp at what Hector had found. He was standing on the edge of a small cove that was almost completely hidden from the sea or other inlets around it and the fish were so plentiful, they were almost jumping onto the shore to be eaten. Boris was standing over a huge stack of fish he had already pulled out for his snack. He looked up and smiled and then yelled "WELL COME ON IN!"

The boys went wild fishing and catching the biggest, fattest fish and eating as fast as they could as though this paradise was going to disappear any second. Soon they were lying on the side of the water moaning for being so full. They napped and got back to their families before they were missed. For the next week, the four happy polar bears snuck off to their secret cove and stuffed themselves full on the amazing abundance of fish in that cove. To a polar bear, an unlimited quantity of fish is like unlimited money or gold is to humans so you can imagine how much they wanted to keep it all for themselves.

On the eighth day of the feast, finally as they lay there groaning, Philippe said, "You know, I don't feel right keeping this to ourselves. Our parents work so hard to hunt for food for us and when I get home, I am not even hungry any more. I know all of our parents are pretty rich but maybe we should share this with our families."

"I think we should share it with the poor families in our community." Philippe suddenly announced. "You know Georgio's mom? She is raising 10 cubs herself and her husband was killed by that fishing trawler so it's hard for her to find enough fish. I want to share with them." Quietly Pudgy thought that was a good idea but the other bears got very upset.

"All those cubs will eat it all gone and there will be none left for us!" Hector worried.

"They can have our scraps but they shouldn't get the best. They are poor. They wouldn't know what to do with all this wealth. They would just waste it." Boris added and they threw snowballs at Philippe for such a dumb idea. Pudgy felt bad for now defending Philippe who had to take that abuse all alone. All the way home, they taunted him when finally Pudgy spoke up.

"I don't think we know best about this. Let's consult King Marcos. He will know what to do." He advised.

King Marcos was the wise head of the polar bear community and it was well known he would help them see what God would have them do with the fortune. Boris and Hector knew that their parents were on some committees with King Marcos so they would advise him that the wealthy deserve this amazing discovery and that the poor should just have the left overs. The day came for the little bears to go in and see King Marcos but the rest were all scared so they made Pudgy go in and tell him what they found. When he came out, all of the little bears were on fire with curiosity but all Pudgy said was. "I just told him what we found. I told him both sides of our talks about what to do with it all and he just thanked me and said he would decide before the Polar Bear Council this Friday.

The Polar Bear council was where King Marcos gathered every single bear in the community and told them of his recent decisions, news that concerns the community and his rulings. The meeting went on and on and on and the four baby bears were so bored but they stayed to hear his decision.

"And now I want to tell you of four baby bears who are setting an example of how to serve God and their fellow bears." The king finally announced. "These four bears found a treasure trove of fish, enough to feed all of us for many generations to come. They did not hoard it for themselves but they want to share it with all of us. Come up here boys." He said signaling to the four little bears to join him on the flat rise where he did his announcements.

"These four baby bears have given their find, which they could have kept hidden for themselves, to the community and it is my decision that the first to visit the cove will be the poorest amongst us. I decided this because this is what our great God who created all living things would want and I know that in their hearts, these wonderful boys want to serve God more than anything. They have truly brought a miracle from God to us and God will reward them mightily." The roar of approval that went up from all the bears in the community was thunderous. Each baby polar bear could look out and see their families and see them beam with pride for them.

All of the boys were blushing but when Pudgy looked over at Hector and Boris, he knew that in their hearts they were both unhappy with the decision but also embarrassed because they were being praised for their

love of the poor but they secretly didn't want to serve. The meeting ended and the four little bears met privately.

"I am sorry I didn't encourage us to give the fish to the poor." Boris said. "Pudgy, you and Philippe were right. We don't deserve these praises and yet somehow we feel proud that it turned out this way."

"Its ok Boris" a voice came from behind them and King Marcos had walked up and put his huge paws on their heads to give them some pats of appreciation. "Even if you had your doubts, you did the right thing. And because you overcame selfishness to serve God, your sacrifice is even more wonderful. Forget your sins and praise God that you are going to be a good little polar bear from this day forward."

And from that day forward all of the little bears were the best citizens of the community and they knew that even better than the fish, the episode at the cove taught them how to be humble and know God's heart for the poor and that lesson was more valuable than all the wealth in the universe.