

In his prologue, the Pardoner tells the other pilgrims he uses the same theme for every sermon. 1 The Pardoner explains that after the congregation sits, he tells them stories comprised of lies and uses the metaphor of a pigeon to describe his posture in the pulpit. 2 The Pardoner describes storytelling as something he does with both his voice and body since it is a form of entertainment he uses to reinforce his theme that money and greed are the root of all evil. This he does to separate the congregation from their money rather than to save them from their sins. 3 The Pardoner says that when one dies the sin no longer matters. 4 Then the Pardoner tells the pilgrims that he is not alone in his motives and that the only people for whom he cares are other pardoners. 5 Acknowledging his poisonous speech, the Pardoner says he pretends to be holy but that his sermons have one purpose: to make him rich. 6 This is ironic since the Pardoner preaches against greed. 7 Although the Pardoner can get members of the congregation to repent from their sins, he's more interested in getting them to give him their money than in providing them absolution. 8 To achieve his goal, the Pardoner tells stories and says that his conscience tells him to do this. 9 The Pardoner says he has no desire to be poor like the apostles but that he is willing to take money from the poor and keep a mistress in every city he visits. 10 Coming to the end of his prologue, the Pardoner says he's ready to tell his story since he's drunk and is a good storyteller despite being a wicked man. 11.

1. Greed is the root of all evil.
2. I take great pains, and stretching out my neck
To east and west I crane about and peck
Just like a pigeon sitting on a barn.
3. For my exclusive purpose is to win
And not at all to castigate their sin.
4. Once dead what matter how their souls may fare?
5. Believe me, many a sermon or devotive
Exordium issues from an evil motive...no
escape
For him from slandering falsehood shall there be,
if he has hurt my brethren or me.
6. I preach for nothing but for greed of gain.
7. And thus I preach against the very vice I make my living out of—avarice.
8. Covetousness is both the root and stuff
Of all I preach.
9. That I will live in poverty, from choice? That's not the counsel of my inner voice!
10. There's no apostle I would counterfeit; I mean to have money...
Though it were given me by the poorest...
And keep a jolly wench in every town!
11. Now as I've drunk a draught of corn-ripe ale,...
I can strike
On some good story

that you all will like.