



“THE FATHER ALWAYS HAS WHAT YOU NEED”

Luke 15:11-31

Sermon Text Verse: Luke 15:17-24

On this Father’s Day, I lift up an ancient parable as told by Jesus of a man who had two sons. The second son asked for his inheritance early. The laws regarding such a transaction are not entirely clear, but it is clear enough that the younger son’s demand was both disrespectful and irregular. He was breaking family ties and treating his father as though he were already dead.

The younger son’s actions report his progressive estrangement from his family, mismanagement of his inheritance, and descent into poverty and privation. First, he collects his goods and travels to a far or distant country. He parties away his money, a famine arises making the price of food skyrocket, and he finds himself in the most elemental form of human need—hunger. He attaches himself to a farmer just to stay alive. His job was to feed pigs. Swine, of course, were an abomination to Jesus’ Jewish audience (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8). So complete was the young son’s fall and so desperate was his need that he desired to be filled with the pods the swine were eating. What a joke for a Jewish boy!!

The boy thought by taking his share of the money, going to a far country, experiencing freedom that he would ‘find himself,’ but he only lost himself. When God is left out of our lives, enjoyment becomes enslavement. The son’s return, repentance or ‘his change of mind’ begins in the mire of the swine pen. (Luke 15:17) Finally, he comes to his senses and said, “My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death.” He ‘came to himself,’ which suggests to us that to this point he had not really ‘been himself.’ There is an ‘insanity’ in sin that seems to paralyze the image of God within us and liberate the animal inside.

The young man took an honest look at himself and admitted he was a sinner. He confessed that his father was a generous man “that what he really needed and wanted the father had it all the time.” Everything the younger son had hoped to find in the far country, he discovered it was back home—clothes, jewelry, friends, joyful celebrations, love, and assurance for the future. In the far country, the son learned the meaning of misery, but back home, he discovered the meaning of mercy. He gets up and returns to his father. Here the point of view shifts from the returning son to the ‘waiting father.’ The ‘waiting father’ has not gone in search of his son, but has done something even harder—he has waited at home, continually watching the road leading to the gate of his property. He runs, meets him, kisses him, kills a calf, puts a robe, sandals, and a ring on his finger—because he loved his son. He forgave his son and received him home with all of his privileges restored.

Remember when we go off and squander our lives in sin separated from God, we too must come to our senses and realize that ‘Our Father has always had what we needed.’ He will joyfully receive us home, celebrate our return, forgive us and restore our relationship. It is God’s grace and mercy that is there all of the time.

This morning, if you have wandered into a distant land far from God, remember the Father is patiently waiting with open arms to give you what you need: PEACE, JOY, LOVE, and ETERNAL LIFE.
COME HOME—THE FEAST IS READY!!

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