

Wednesday, May 22 | The return.

Luke 15:17-24 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

After realizing what he had done, the prodigal son came up with a plan to at least work his way back into his father’s acceptance. Maybe he can get back in good standing with his family community. There was a surprise awaiting. While he was away, his father had been anticipating his return. The father also anticipated the son would lose all his inheritance, so the father had devised a plan to save him! He didn’t want to see his son rejected by the family and he had certainly not forgotten nor written him off as family had tradition held.

Once again, all traditions were thrown out the window. See, God does this for us. He doesn’t do what is expected. He does what is best! In the parable, the father begins as representing God the Father but watch carefully as he morphs into the character of Jesus the Son as he offers a plan of salvation for this extravagantly reckless son. Gracious and merciful.

The father sees his son and puts himself in a place of humility, shameful humility that is, picks up his robes, and exposes his legs – which was unheard of! He does this quickly so he can run to his son, offer himself as a servant to him, and ultimately offer his grace to save him from the rejection and the consequences of his choices. What a beautiful picture of Jesus’ sacrifice of humility and grace for us. The father didn’t wait for the son’s confession of all his sins. He only wanted the son to make that first step towards him. Jesus wants a sinner to turn to him. “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:8 NKJV

The father ran! Not because he was overjoyed to see him. He wanted to save him. Jesus runs to us when he sees us seeking him! When our lost loved ones start seeking him, he will run! How encouraging is this? How much more does that take the load off of our shoulders to just present the love of God and allow him to run to them? Once that door is just cracked with curiosity, the Holy Spirit begins a work. Stay strong, Christian, God is working.

My heart is heavy today for so many of my own loved ones. But I have to keep believing that God is continuing to draw near to them. They know the saving grace and mercy of his love. That door has been open before. Most of us are in this situation together. I pray for your heavy heart today, for family or friends. God is stronger than the enemy. Don’t stop praying, as the song goes, straight from 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “pray continuously.”

Q. Is there someone heavy in your heart today? Share if you want, or we can pray for them anonymously.

MEMORY VERSE 1: Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."