

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Reading Luke 15:11-32

Meditation

It's the modern version of the prodigal son, and it's every parent's nightmare. The sullen, rebellious teenager who won't listen to reason. Who gets into trouble with the law. Who finally runs away from home. He thinks that life would be better if he were on his own, away from parents, away from rules, where he could do whatever he wants. His parents become frantic and try every way possible to contact him. All too often these stories end in tragedy, but

sometimes the teenager does return because he realizes that home is where he is really loved. And his parents are overjoyed to receive him back into the family.

So it was with the Prodigal Son a long time ago. The young man went to his father and asked for all the money that would eventually be his. His father gave it to him, and the young man went out and spent it all on a wild time. Then he had nothing left. He took a job caring for pigs and saw that even the pigs had a better life than he did. He realized that he had made a mistake and returned to his father. He told his father that he had sinned and wasn't worthy to be called his son any longer. He wanted to live at home again but only as a servant. The father, however, was thrilled—he called for all the best to be given to his son. The father announced, "My son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found."

Could it be that we are like the Prodigal Son or the rebellious teenager in our relationship with the Father? We all make mistakes and sin. But the more we do, the more we separate ourselves from the family of God and feel like that young man—lost, alone, afraid, desperate. Like the Prodigal Son, we don't realize the happiness of being with our Father until we have lost it.

But God our Father, just like the father in the parable, is always ready to take us back. For that to happen, though, we have to do something. First, we acknowledge that we have done wrong things. Then we turn to God and apologize to him for what we have done. God will gladly take us back into his family.

Prayer

*Father, life away from you can lead to destruction
and to death.
But we know that you are always there for us, if we ask.
Give us the strength to turn to you, and to repent.
Help us return to your family and to your eternal love.*

For reflection

How have I wandered away from God's love?

Do I confess my sins to God? What are my sins right now?

Did you know . . .

*The Sundays of Great Lent trace redemption history from
our loss of paradise to its restoration through Jesus Christ.
Each Sunday has a special name and Scripture lesson
designed to teach that the Lenten journey mirrors our own
real path back to God.*