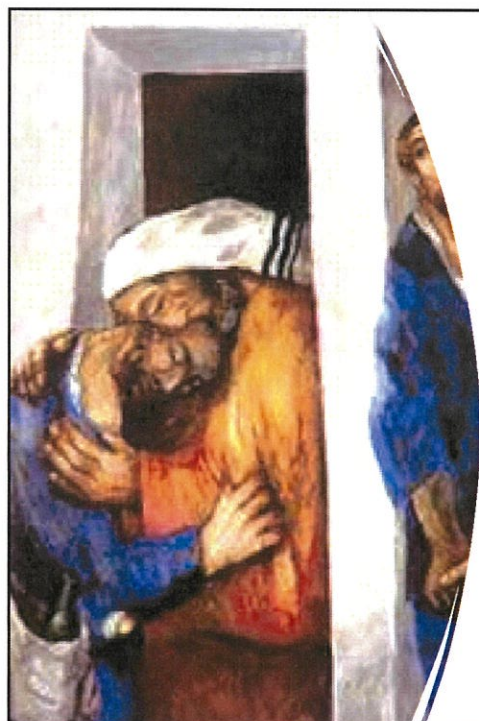


Prodigal Son



Prodigal Son



Prodigal Son

- Chapter fifteen in Luke's Gospel is all about lost and found
- Three parables feature loss and recovery:
 - A lost coin
 - A lost sheep
 - A lost son
- In these stories the material, animal and human are restored to right relationship after a search.
- The parable of the father and his two son offers many treasures in which to find new ways of imagining and embracing God.
- Let us explore the richness of Luke's prodigal father and what this image can help us appreciate about the fatherhood of God.
- This will help us to deepen our surrender to his boundless mercy and joy.



- When his younger son asked him for his share, what would come to his mind? “Dad, I wish that you were already dead...”

This father did not express offence but freely gave the son what he asked for.

God also gives us a freedom to use well or abuse the inheritance we have already received.

We, like God, have a free will to do and go where we wish.

We have a mind that can recognize truth and conceive lies.

We have a heart that can choose to show respect or choose evil.

Prodigal
Father

- Our bodies are the place where we act out our freedom.
- Our hearts are where we make our choices.
- Our minds are where we judge between one thing and another.
- We see, judge and act based on the deeper integration of Divine Spirit in our lives.
- In this way, our lives reflect the four quadrants of creation which are reflected in our own circle of life.
- But when we act contrary to Spirit then we begin to experience disintegration and disorientation.
- The younger son tasted the emptiness of this journey away from love when he recognized that his search brought him to a place of complete dissatisfaction and alienation.

Prodigal Father

- His father sees him while he is “far off” and is moved with compassion.
- The New Testament word used here comes from the word for intestines or guts, and indicates the stirring of our deepest instinctual feelings towards something.
- In English, the word used is compassion, but the Greek word is better translated like “his bowels were moved with compassion.”
- This is not a mental compassion or sympathy, not a emotional sentimentality but a visceral, blood and guts identification with and movement for the one struggling.

+ Prödigal Father

- The belly or the gut has a fierce fidelity that can be much more powerful than that of thinking or feeling.
- The Old Testament often uses a word, “Racham” for God’s compassion that is from the word for a mother’s womb.
- Psalm 110 speaks of an image of the relationship of the Son to the Father:

**“From the womb of the morning,
like dew, your youth will come to you.**

**The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,
You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”**

Prodigal Son

1. As we look closely, the younger is in complete peace.



2. He rests his head on the bosom of his father, like a sleeping child on a mother's lap.


3. The son's garments are tattered and torn like a ship's sail after a storm or someone returning after a lost battle.

4. The yellowish clothing we notice are under garments, his outer protective shell is gone, his ego, his pride, his honour is gone.


5. The young man's head is shaved like that of a convict, or someone abused by others.

6. Bystanders are watching the warm welcome by his father; only the reunion matters now.


Prodigal Son




While he lost most of the things, he has retained his knife, a small sign of his remaining nobility and connection.




His posture is that of kneeling is not a fearful posture of surrender, waiting for **punishment** but a posture of falling into the embrace of a trusted father.



A sense of **welcome and acceptance**.



There is a **sense** of trustful surrender.



His feet tell of a long humiliating journey, one shoe is gone and the other is worn out. This speaks of his suffering and misery.



Prodigal Son (Reflection)

- He left with so much pride, determined to live away from the father and his community.
- His happiness lasted for a short time only.
- He returns poor, humiliated, has a complete sense of lost.
- He is longing for the father, family and his community and belonging once again.
- There is a sense of relief that he has returned home.
- I wonder how does he feel when he hears his father say, "This is my beloved, This is my son, kill the fatted calf, we are going to celebrate his return."

Prodigal Son

He may not notice the older brother's reluctance to receive him, but he knows he was unconditionally welcomed by his father.

There is a sense of unconditional unity and reunification.

At this time, he does not care about what others will speak of him or what the society will think of his own return.

He is immersed in his father's unconditional love and the peace he has received.

Prodigal Son (Self-Reflection)

- How would I feel if I was the young son, returning home after disrespecting my father and family?
- What type of welcome would I expect? Does this prevent me from reconnecting to those that I have disconnected from because of disagreements - parents, family or even God?
- What is this parable, this unconditional welcome embrace trying to tell me about my relationship with God?
- Perhaps there is a reluctance to return, to let go.
- A reluctance to welcome God into my life, with complete surrender of trust.
- Not a surrender of fear, rather a surrender of resting my faith and trust on the bosom of God.

Prodigal Son (Self-Reflection)

- Knowing deep within my being that I truly longed for this deep connection, I finally realize my own ego, self-pride, my own youthful arrogance led me far away from my own deep self.
- My life lost meaning when I was disconnected from God:
 1. I chose to fill that void with all sorts of temporal joys, money, fame, superficial relationships which ended only in pain and addiction.
 2. In the end, my soul remained unsatisfied.
 3. Regardless of how I try to fill that void, it is only the bosom of God that will bring me comfort.

What is the spiritual and scriptural message?

- What does this parable tell me?
- When I read the parable, does it remind me to trust in God more deeply? +
- During this Lenten period, it is a period of reconnecting, refocusing, renewing our relationship in God and families. ○
- Often there can be reluctance; this image reminds me in a real way that God is waiting for our embrace.
- Will I have the courage to surrender my ego, my pride, my arrogance, my fear, to allow myself to be embraced unconditionally by the love of God?
- To trust beyond myself.

Inviting all the participants to reflect on it.

- Please absorb the image, the painting, the parable to see how it speaks to you.
- Place yourself in the image and see how it speaks to you.
- Reflect on it a few times each day. How we might be the young son, reluctant to return to God.
- How often we too might only trust in our self, and how that brings us sorrow and unfulfilled longing.

Younger Son and the Older Son

DISRESPECTFUL, IMPULSIVE, AND SINFUL

He asked for his share

He asked because he knew the father

He was never afraid to ask even after he had wasted all of his inheritance

HARD-WORKING, OBEDIENT AND RATIONAL

He didn't ask for his share

He didn't ask maybe he didn't know well his father

Maybe he was so afraid of his father that he never asked for anything

The Elder Son

- Returning from his field work, he was surprised to hear all the commotion and rejoicing in the house.
- When he enquired, he was told that his brother had suddenly turned up and his father had killed the fatted calf to celebrate.
- His anger grew even more.
- He had probably for years been jealous of his younger brother as their father's favourite.
- He had deeply resented the father's yielding to the whim of his younger brother.
- Who is going to pay for all this?

The Elder Son

- When his father pleaded, all his resentment burst out.
- He adds, “this son of yours” comes back after wasting “all your property” and you kill the fatted calf for him.
- His father attempts to explain that they are always together.
- We had to celebrate and rejoice because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life.
- Finally, we presume that he joined the celebration.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- Hurt people, hurt people.
- Forgiveness is the act of pardoning an offender.
- In the Bible, the Greek word for “Forgiveness” literally means “to let go”.
- Reconciliation is the process of two people or groups in a conflict agreeing to make amends.
- **There is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation:**
 1. Forgiveness is unilateral. It is a process which we can do on our own.
 2. Reconciliation is bilateral. It takes two or more people.

Forgiveness

- **Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free realizing that you were the prisoner.**
- Forgiveness is never easy. The memory of wrongs done to us seeps into our hearts, producing a legacy of bitterness.
- First and foremost, to forgive is our duty we owe ourselves.
- We forgive for the sake of our own well-being.
- We forgive because we don't want to live with feelings of resentment and desire for revenge.
- We forgive in order to cleanse ourselves of these poisonous attitudes and state of mind.

Forgiveness

- Jesus says that unless we forgive God won't forgive us.
- The fault is not with God but with us.
- When we refuse to forgive, we break down the bridge over which we ourselves must pass.
- When we forgive, we ourselves are the main beneficiaries.
- But forgiveness also benefits the person who is forgiven.
- It sets the person free to walk in friendship with God and with the person she/ he has offended.
- We constantly fall short of complete forgiveness. That's why Jesus tells us that we have to forgive seventy-seven times.

Forgiveness

- Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting the wrong done to us.
- It means remembering and letting go.
- Forgiveness is one of the highest and most beautiful forms of love.
- It is a holy task.
- Only God can help us to accomplish it fully.
- The servant in Jesus' story owed the Lord so much money that even if he worked forever, he would not be able to repay him.
- His position was absolutely hopeless.
- All he could do was beg for mercy.

Forgiveness

- Forgiveness starts with willingness to forgive.
- We have to make a decision to forgive. But this does not mean that feelings of hurt and bitterness will suddenly disappear.
- The healing of these will take time. Just as deep bodily wounds need longer healing, the same is true for our soul.
- We all need to forgive at one time or another, we all have been hurt.
- What can we do?
- We have to remember that forgiveness is a process.

Forgiveness is a Process

1. We must recognize that we have suffered a hurt.
2. We must recognize that we have feelings about this. We feel angry and hurt. These feelings are not sins. They are natural.
3. We should share our feelings about what has been done to us with someone we trust.
4. We should make a decision about our relationship with the person who has hurt us – whether to continue or to discontinue. Forgiveness doesn't always lead to reconciliation.
5. We should make a decision to forgive. Forgiveness is an act of the will, not of the feelings.

