

The Prodigal

*“The younger one said to his father,
‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’
So he divided his property between them.”
Luke 15:12 (NIV)*

I recall a story told to me by one of my professors. He was visiting a friend of his at his home. During dinner a knock was heard at the door. The friend of my professor rose and answered the door.

The person standing at the door was a police officer. The officer asked the man if he had a son by the name of Joey . . . The man said yes and the policeman said that the young man had been arrested for possession of drugs for the purpose of trafficking.

The shocked father asked if the police could be mistaken. There was no mistake and the father was told that if he came down to the jail he could post bail for his son and take him home.

My professor went with his friend to the jail. After signing some papers the police led the son out to the front desk and his upset father. The son could not look his dad in the eye but stared at the floor and said, “I’m sorry Dad, I guess you really hate me now don’t you.”

The father’s response to his repentant son was remarkable. He said, “Joey I don’t understand you and I don’t approve of what you’ve done. But if I live to be a hundred you will never teach me to hate you. Come on, let’s go home.”

The story of the prodigal son who boldly asked his father for his inheritance and then spent it foolishly is the context of our verse today. When the money ran out the young man, we are told, “...came to himself...” He recognized his folly, repented and went back home to ask for the lowliest place on the family estate, that of a simple hired hand.

When the father saw the wayward son returning he immediately ordered a party to celebrate his return, ran to meet him, and dressed the young man in the finest clothes in the family house. The father forgave the son, reassured him of his undying love, and celebrated his return.

Jesus told the story of the prodigal so that a person who

has gone astray from their Creator might have hope of returning to God when they realize just how far they have gone from Him. No one should think they have gone so far into sin that God would not have them back.

The amazing grace of God can reach to the depths of sin and rebellion and lift the poor sinner up into the house of God. God is likened to a loving father whose greatest joy is in having the prodigal return to him.

If you have wandered far from the God Who made you, remember this story (Luke 15:11-32). See that the repentant son did not make it all the way back home before the father ran to meet him. Such is the greatness of the Father’s love. No one is turned away from the grace of God except those who refuse to come.

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