



The Prodigal Son

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Also recorded as 'The Lost Son' and found in Luke 15:11-32

Note: 'Prodigal' means: Wasteful, careless with money and uncaring of his future needs.

This is a truly unusual story but a glorious illustration of the love God has for us, His creation. (Not one of us is without some serious sins in our life-especially in our youth.)

Jesus began: "A man had two sons..." The younger one was restless for 'the good life' and must have hated the boring farm life- and there was fun, music, girls and much wine in the big cities. So that's where his thoughts and longings were. Common today?!

There was another, older son, who 'did everything right' - so to speak - and obeyed his father at all times.

One day the younger son asked his father for his share of the estate (inheritance of property) that he would normally get after his father had died. His father gave it to him.

Jesus does not mention what the father was thinking at such a request but the father must have been sad, knowing what would happen to the money his son would get. Fathers do get to know how each child thinks as they grow up.

Soon after that the young man gathered all he had (money, clothes, etc) and journeyed to a distant land where he did enjoy all the 'pleasures' - wine, women and song - until his money ran out. All of his 'fair weather friends' then left him.

Then a bad famine came upon the land and he became hungry and I guess lonely, with no friends to help him. He got a job with a local farmer feeding pigs!! For a Jew (Hebrew or Israelite) being near pigs (swine) was a supreme shame and a very degrading job but he had no choice and often looked at the food he was giving to the pigs and thought it looked good enough for him to eat.

Like some of today's drug addicts he 'hit rock bottom' and realised just how far he had fallen. He thought of home.

At last he thought to himself: "My father has servants and slaves who do the work he tells them to and have a bed and food to eat. I'll go home to him and ask to be treated like one of them." So he began walking home. He must have felt pretty low and he prepared a 'Speech' in his mind to "Tell his father that he had been stupid and was no longer fit to be called his son...so please make me like one of your hired servants."

It those days servants lived on the farm and with no cars or transport or their own home they lived on the property.

As he neared his home, Jesus said, his father saw him a long way off and ran to greet him by embracing and 'kissing him' (people in Eastern lands do not kiss as we do but touch cheeks instead). The father paid no attention to his son's 'Speech' of his regret but ordered his servants to begin rejoicing and re-clothing the son with the best clothes, and prepare to celebrate (this writer,

the answerer, for many years, believed the son was stupid and did not deserve such kindness – much like the older brother believed). I understood later.

When the older brother later came in from the fields and heard the sound of music and celebration, he asked a servant what the celebration was all about. He was angry at his brother's treatment and would not go into the house and join in the celebrations.

His father came out to him and tried to explain just why there was celebrations and not to explain away his son's foolishness. "We must be glad, for my son is not dead but alive, he was lost but is now found."

This story from Jesus shows so well how God welcomes back a fallen sinner. God is so glad – and the angels rejoice too.

Dean Farrar summed this story up beautifully by writing: "All the writings of Socrates, Confucius and several others are no match for the forgiveness, compassion and love of God for us as shown by the father of the 'lost' son." (*The Life of Christ*, Dean Farrar 1909 (pp.433-434)). It can be read on the www.

Jesus must have the last word on this story: In the story in Luke just before this one, Jesus spoke of a man who had 100 sheep but lost one of them and hunted until he found it, and came home rejoicing about it and Jesus said: "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." (Luke 15:7 NIV). Rejoicing in heaven?! Then there must be many souls there along with God, Jesus, the two Archangels Michael and Gabriel who celebrate. True or false? You decide, OK?

