

The Prodigal Son

How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants—Luke 15:17–19

This is part of a story that Jesus told. It is called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The word prodigal means wasteful or careless. When you read or listen to the story, think about what this son wasted in his life and how the memories of his home helped him to return.

The prodigal son was desperate, hungry, and alone. He had left his home quite some time before. Everything had gone wrong after he left home. His new friends turned out not to be real friends; they left him when he ran out of money. Now he had started a new job that he didn't like at all. He was looking after a certain man's pigs. The food that the pigs ate seemed anything but good. But he was so hungry that he asked for permission to eat it. He was not allowed.

In this situation the prodigal son remembered his former home. It had been a good place to live. He remembered his dear father, who had been sad when he had packed his belongings and left. He realized now that the father had been right when he had warned him about leaving home. Oh, how difficult everything felt now. "Why did I leave?" he asked himself. He remembered that home life had seemed so boring; he had wanted change and adventure in his life.

Now he had to admit that sin had taken all his strength. It wasn't as easy to return as he had thought. "Here I am starving to death and at home even the servants have enough to eat," he thought. "I'll go back home," he decided. "God, please give me strength," he said to himself.

Such was the battle of the prodigal son.

He remembered his dear home. The memories were good. God gave him strength and humbleness to return. All was forgiven; hope and happiness returned.

May the story of the prodigal son warn us all to stay in the Father's house, in God's kingdom. May we all want to believe as humble grace-children. There is food, shelter, and protection in the Father's home for every believer.

Jouko Haapsaari

Think about and discuss with your parents what we learn from the Parable of the Prodigal Son

1. Why did the prodigal son leave his home? What was he seeking from elsewhere?
2. What did the son waste, or lose, when he left home in this way?
3. Read Luke 15:20. How did the Father, that is our Heavenly Father, receive the penitent sinner?
4. What did the prodigal son gain when he returned and repented?

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