

(Luke 15:11-24, NIV84)

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

August 1

Afraid To Try Out God's Love?

O taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm 34:8

We can well imagine the thoughts which must have surged through the mind of the prodigal son as he trudged along the road that led back to his father's house. Would the door be open-the door to the familiar home of his childhood, and the door to his father's heart? Or would those doors be closed to him forever? How did his father feel? What did he think? What would he say? What would he do?

The young man would never know unless, despairing of all else, he would throw himself completely on his father's mercy. And so he did just that. He decided to try out his father's love. And "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." There was love aplenty-even for the prodigal in the tender father-heart.

And there is also love aplenty in the Father-heart of our heavenly Father. "O taste and see that the Lord is good", he pleads with us. "Where sin abounded, grace [love and mercy] did much more abound", says Paul. Or, as

John says: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

After we have wandered down the path of sin far from God, how comforting it is to know that, if we return to him in penitence and faith, he is not a stern Judge determined to mete out justice, but rather, a loving Father, waiting with outstretched arms, eager to receive us, eager to forgive us. In view of the Gospel message, could we ever doubt the fullness, the tenderness, the all-sufficiency of the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord?

Just as I am: Thy love unknown Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)