

A Prodigal Returns

A First-Century Monologue of the Lost Son of Luke 15:11-31

(A man in tattered first-century garb walks wearily to the front of the audience.)

I. Problems at Home

- A. At times, we don't *like* our brothers or sisters—but my problem was worse than that. I *hated* my older brother. *Always* hard working. *Always* submissive to Dad. *Always*... Mr. Right.
- B. Not only that, but there's also this custom called the birthright. This means the oldest son gets twice as much inheritance. That left two-thirds for him and only one-third for me. As if I didn't have enough problems already!
- C. So I told Dad, "Father, give me my share of the estate." This was a lot to ask. Imagine giving away a third of your business and then trying to survive against the competition!
- D. But Father didn't argue. With a grieved heart, he just gave me my share.

II. Problems Away

- A. Pretty soon, I gathered all that money and everything I had and headed far away for a good time. It wasn't hard to leave because I hated my brother and had no friends at home.
- B. Hmm, interesting. I discovered that in the distant land suddenly, I had *plenty* of friends! Drinks were on me! The wild women noticed my wealth, too. It didn't take long for all my wealth to transfer to them, and I became the one in need.
- C. Just when my "friends" disappeared, so did the food. A *real* tough famine came. I had never known hunger before, so my stomach pains were intense.
- D. But I got a job—if you can call it that—for a Gentile! A *Gentile*! He had me raise *pigs*—that's as low as a good Jewish boy like me can get. My boss hadn't paid me yet, so even the pods I threw to these unclean animals looked tasty after a while!
- E. Then a thought hit me, "Even my Dad's *servants* don't go hungry like this! Yet here I am, *starving* to death! I'll return to him and say, 'Father, I've sinned against God and sinned against you. I don't even deserve to be called your son again. Take me as a hired hand.'"

III. My Return

- A. On the long journey back home, I rehearsed my speech many times—not that I thought he'd reject me, but I wanted to say it just right.
- B. As I approached my house, I wondered which servant I'd see first in the fields. Would it be Eliab? Jonadab? But no, it was my Father himself—still watching for me! He ran to me and I didn't know what to expect. It looked like he would give me a punch in my hungry stomach—but then he gave me a great bear hug! He kissed me over and over so much I almost forgot my speech.
- C. Then it came to me: "Father, I've sinned against God and sinned against you. I don't even deserve to be called your son again."

- D. Before I could get to the “take me as a hired hand” part, my Dad was shouting to the servants, “Hey, Eliab! Jonadab! Quick! Bring out the nice robe. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! Roast that fat heifer! It’s feast time tonight! My younger son was dead but now has come back to life! He was lost and now is found!”

IV. Conclusion

- A. So, they did it. I never knew my Dad could party like that.
- B. The grand feast happened so fast that they forgot to invite my brother. But he heard the music from the fields and, soon enough, he found out about it, stalking off in anger. Dad himself went out to the fields and begged him to come in.
- C. Then he gave Father his speech: “Look how many years I’ve slaved for you, never giving you a moment of grief. But have you ever thrown a party for my friends and me? No! Yet this idiot son of yours wastes your money on whores and you whoop it up with a feast?!”
- D. Father had the last word though: “Son, you are with me now and the whole inheritance is yours. But we *must* celebrate! Your brother was dead but is alive now! He was lost but now is found!”