

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, 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. And he arose, and came to his father. But 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. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.(KJV)

Believers are blessed to contemplate the current Gospel in preparation for Great Lent. This is a time to draw closer to God and move away from sin.

The returning prodigal son verifies the value of repudiating sin.

The prodigal son initially decided to live on his own and away from his father. The youngest son took goods from his father and went off to a far county to live in a riotous way.

The young son wanted to be on his own. He distanced himself from his family. The young son eventually became impoverished. The father's servants had a better life than the young son.

How many persons distance themselves from God, their families and fall into sinfulness? All of us move away from God in the course of daily life and waste our resources in ways not pleasing to God.

We all impoverish ourselves by not using our gifts and talents from God in ways most pleasing to the Lord. The present Gospel encourages us to see our own ways of riotous living and the need to return home to God.

Each believer can find him or herself in the prodigal son. The Church's message of the present Gospel is to return to God. Now is the time to return and experience the love of God as exemplified in the Father in the Gospel.

Hunger in the soul moves a believer to seek nourishment from God. Hunger propelled the prodigal son to return to his father's house. Each believer will benefit from fully returning to God as a result of the present Gospel.

The prodigal son was welcomed with great joy and love by his father. The father celebrated. We know from Jesus Christ the joy that comes when a sinner repents. We are all prodigal sons and daughters. We are all sinners.

Only Jesus Christ is perfect and without sin. Jesus said: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Lk. 15:7)

God's Holy Church provides the nourishment and welcoming love for prodigal sons and daughters seeking to move away from sin. Conscious decisions to reject sin and to return to God result in experiencing God's healing love.

Prodigal sons and daughters are fully welcomed when beginning anew in Christ. The present Gospel is direct encouragement from the Jesus Christ to return from the poverty of sin and to experience the richness in Christ.

The prodigal son learned he could not live well without the love and support of his father. He realized the shortcomings of living a riotous life. All believers have similar periods of prideful blindness that lead to poverty for the soul.

All believers have periods of personal pride that leads to sinfulness in life without God. Wisdom exists in heeding the lesson of the prodigal son in the present Gospel.

Wisdom exists in rejecting sin and returning to the loving God. Today is the day to heed the message of God's Holy Church. Today is the day to firmly reject life away from God.

God's Holy Church offers the Gospel for nourishment of all willing to listen attentively. God's Holy Church provides healing of depressed conditions arising out of the soul's poverty.

Strength is derived from the Gospel as exclaimed in God's Holy Church. Life's purpose and direction become evident for believer's seeking the Kingdom of God.

The Church is moving with certainty toward the celebration of Christ's Resurrection. The journey to Pascha is underway. Wise believers move forward in the journey with Christ in faith and love.

The Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Holy Apostle Onesimus. Venerable Eusebius the Recluse. February 15/28, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic