

The Father and Two Lost Sons

Scripture Reading — Luke 15:11-32

“My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.”
—Luke 15:31 —

When we read this parable carefully, we discover that the main character is the father. One son leaves because he is rebellious; the other son rebels because he is self-righteous.

Since the younger son believes he will never own the estate, he takes his inheritance and runs. After squandering all his wealth, he assumes that he can never return home. But the father is always ready to welcome him back.

The elder brother contends that he has never disobeyed his father’s orders, and yet his father never gave him a young goat to celebrate with his friends. Pleading, the father says, “My son ... you are always with me.” They are on different wavelengths. The father builds bridges while the elder son puts up fences.

This parable cleverly contrasts the human never and the divine always. Like the two sons, we often feel deprived. We feel we never receive what we deserve. Yet we seldom realize that the grace we receive is something we never deserve.

The compassionate love of the father holds the two parts of the story together. Out of love for the younger son, the father welcomes him home. Out of love for the elder son, the father leaves the celebration to explain and invite him in.

All that the Father has is ours as well. Do we realize how much he always loves us?

Prayer

Father, your loving presence draws us into fellowship with you and all your children. Help us to show your gracious love to everyone. In Jesus, Amen.

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