

**June 19-20, 2010**  
**Vicar Jacob Stuenkel**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity**  
**Trinity Lutheran Girard, IL**

Grace mercy and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Text for the Sermon today is from the Gospel Reading, Luke 15, **"It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."**

**Illustration:** *Have you ever done something so bad you thought you were never going to be forgiven? Have you ever done something so bad you just didn't know what the response would be?* For those of you in a marriage, or those of you that have parents, I'm sure you probably did something you weren't supposed to do. You also probably weren't sure what the response was going to be. I remember when I was in college. My school year was almost over so I was getting rid of all these files. I was deleting all this stuff I had worked on and I deleted something I wasn't supposed to. After I deleted this file the computer stopped working. You have to understand my father owned the computer, and he let me borrow his laptop. Now, my father has a quick temper, so when I got home, I never told him about it! The truth is, I didn't know how he would react. I didn't know what he would say. I was where the prodigal son found himself in our reading.

Today's reading is called the parable of the Prodigal son. It's a son who was living in his father's house. His father was a very wealthy man. So the son asked for his share of the inheritance. The father granted this to him. So then he takes the money and takes off. He goes so far away; he ends up in another country. The story of the Prodigal son in many ways is a metaphor for the entire human race. There is not that much difference between what the son does, and what Adam and Eve did. There they were in Paradise. They had everything. They could eat what

ever they wanted. They had dominion over all the animals. We are told they even walked with God. But for some reason that wasn't enough. The son also, had a wealthy father. He was not in need of food or a place to sleep. But it wasn't enough.

Because of what the son did, he was considered by society to no longer to be in that family. He lost the title of son. Adam and Eve also lost their title as Children of God. They did this by breaking God's Commandment. This is why they are banished by God from Eden. It shows they are no longer in the presence of God. Just like the Prodigal Son is no longer in the presence of his father. This is how we were born into this world. Not being children of God, but children of the devil.

We are all sinners. We are born into a world of sin, we sin ourselves. For this reason we are not in a right relationship with God. There is nothing you can do to fix this situation. We can not do anything that fixes what we have done. Notice how the son says to himself, **18 "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."** He thinks at this point he can do good works to make up for, what he has done. This might seem like a reasonable solution to the problem. The Pharisees Jesus was speaking too, might have also thought the son's solution was a reasonable way for the son to regain his father's favor.

So when the son is at his father's field, his father sees him. Then it says, **"20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him."** Then the son says, **"21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'" But he doesn't even get a chance to say "Treat me as one of your hired servants". Because his father jumps in and says to his servants 22 "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes**

**on his feet.”** The father forgives his son, and his son didn't do anything to make amends.

Adam and Eve were not unlike the Son. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hide. It was the Lord who found them. It was the Lord who told them he was going to save them. They could not do a good work that would gain favor from the Lord.

We know for us, and our situation with God, that it is the Father who makes amends. This is because; it is the Father who sends the Son. It is Son who pays for our trespasses. It is the Son who comes into the world, and pays for our sins. It is his own Son, Jesus Christ, who dies on the Cross. Jesus Christ reconciles us to God. His death made it so we can be back in that relationship with God. It is our Baptism that makes this a reality for us. For it is in Baptism that we are clothed with Christ. Much like the prodigal son was clothed in a robe. We are declared Children of God. We are made part of his family.

*What does the father have after the son returns?* He has a feast. In that feast they eat the sacrificed calf. I think this is reminding us of Communion. Where we eat the body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Knowing that in this feast we are being forgiven of our sins. Also, we are having this feast in the presence of all of heaven. Knowing one day we will be in that presence for eternity.

*We wish that were it, don't we? We would like that to be it, wouldn't we?* We often times forget the second half of this parable. We forget son number two. We forget the son who is angry that his brother is forgiven. He is angry the fatten calf was slaughtered. If this were a Hollywood movie, the second son would run into the banquet and hug his brother. He would be so glad to see his brother is alive and returned home. *That isn't what happens, is it?* For the Pharisees of Jesus' time, they were angry everyone was being forgiven. They were mad that Jesus was sitting with Tax Collectors and Sinners. The Pharisees were a people who worked hard to keep the Torah. They tried to keep the Law. So to

see Jesus sitting with people who were sinners was offensive to them. I don't think the Pharisees ever figured out that they needed Jesus just as much as those sinners and tax collectors. I don't know if they ever realized that they couldn't keep the law. That they were also fallen, and not in a right relationship with God. Notice that the second son is not at the banquet. He is not in a right relationship with the father.

I think this too often happens with us. We have a fellow Christian sin against us, or do something to us. And we just can't forgive them. We forget that they are fallen. We forget that they are children of God also. Sometimes we even get mad when we meet someone who is a Christian and all we see is a sinner. We make the mistake of the second son. Lord how can you forgive that person.

In those moments hopefully we remember how short we have come up. We need to remember that we are sinners, and in need of repentance and forgiveness. That Christ Died for our sins and theirs. Lastly we need to remember what the father told the son. He told him **"It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."** In that moment God is speaking both to us, and about our brothers. That you were dead, and your brother was dead. And now you are alive and so is your brother in Christ. That you were both lost, and now you are found.

**Conclusion:** Eventually my father did find out the computer was broken. He also forgave me for breaking it. He realized that I was a sinful person and things happen. God works forgiveness in us to show others what forgiveness looks like. That is what we are; we are the forgiven children of God. AMEN