

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm 32

Be glad, you righteous, & rejoice in the LORD. (v11)

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, & you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, & feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

...^{11b}“There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had & traveled to a distant country, & there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, & he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went & hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; & no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough & to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up & go to my father, & I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven & before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰So he set off & went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him & was filled with compassion; he ran & put his arms around him & kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven & before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger & sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf & kill it, & let us eat & celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead & is alive again; he was lost & is found!’ & they began to celebrate.”...

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Compare & contrast this parable with the two preceding (Lost Sheep vv4-7, Lost Coin vv8-10); what similarities do you find? What is the occasion for Jesus’ teaching? What does *Joshua 5:9-12* add? See *Luke 8:28-36 43b-45, 13:22, 33, 14:1, 15:1-2, 17:11*
2. Explain if the story’s lesson about the Father is an isolated incident. See *Isaiah 57:14-21; Hosea 2; Amos 9:11-15; John 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 1:8-9;*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Name at least three times you been low & alone (vv15-16). Who had compassion (v20) on you? How did they deliver it to you? How did you feel after receiving such undeserved TLC? Which of your neighbors right now need your compassion?
4. Which character of Jesus’ parable do you most closely identify with? What that makes it so?

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. It’s striking that the father sees the son a long way off & runs to greet him. Lutheran pastor Helmut Thielicke said this parable should be called “The Waiting Father.” How is your congregation eagerly awaiting the brothers & sisters who have yet to come home? *Note: think especially in terms of those neighbors who have treated their previous/childhood exposure to Christianity as an impediment to their lifestyles of choice today.*
- Thank you to Pr. Nathan Hilkert of Holy Cross LC, Athens, GA for questions #4, 5!
6. Is the younger son “off the hook” for his bad behavior? Check vv13, 22, 30-31 How does a congregation live faithfully in the tension of brothers & sisters who have come home, yet don’t get a new fortune to spend? How does the congregation avoid becoming tedious older brothers toward them?

Fourth Sunday in Lent

03.27.22

Series: Repent!

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Running with Arms Open

*When our dreams die & plan fail, all we can do is survive;
God celebrates & honors our return*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: ...let us eat & celebrate; for this son of mine was dead & is
alive again; he was lost & is found! (*v23b-24a*)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

I will arise and go to my father and say,
I have sinned against heaven & before you. (*Luke 15:18*)

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