



Action Assignment

Read and reflect on the following article

by Rev. Dr. Robert Langat



The Prodigal Son

The story of the prodigal son is one of the most redemptive stories that can be found.

There is a young man who through his poor choices loses everything. He rebels against his father and runs away from his home, his family, and his people. This son engages in wild and selfish living and ends up experiencing the pain of sin, total poverty, and separation from his father. The son finds himself in a distant land, starving, and yearning for anything good to eat. In this distant land the son works, but the Bible says “no one gave him anything.”

The rebellious son now lives among pigs, and he has become their servant. The Jews viewed pigs as unclean animals, unfit to eat, and even defiling to those who touch them. And now this young man spends his days cleaning up after pigs. Because of his rebellion, the boy has

exchanged his dignity, his freedom, and even his identity as a son. He has ruined his life and become like an outcast, totally separated from all that is good.

Separated from the Father

Now you may think that you’ve never behaved like the prodigal son, but I want to tell you that there is a younger son in all of us. In fact the world we live in is in a state of rebellion against God. Each of us is born into sin, rejecting God and His ways, and living in selfishness.

In the parable the son asked for his inheritance early. This young man was saying to his father, I don’t want you or your rules. Just give me my money and let me live my own life. It was as if he was wishing that his father was dead. Many of us live as though we want things from God, but we don’t actually want Him in our lives. In Africa today, many of our people have left the disciplined life of the village for the excitement and pleasures of the city. They spend their money

“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.”

-Luke 15:13 (NLT)

on alcohol, discos, and sex and find that they end up empty and broken.

The prodigal son really got lost. And for many people today you may be thinking that I'm lost, there's nothing that can be done, I'm hopeless. But I'm looking at that young man in Jesus' parable. He had sold literally everything. He had disrespected his father. He had no more inheritance. It was the worst of situations.

The Decision to Come Home

He sat and said to himself, my father has workers and these workers enjoy better opportunities and a better life than what I have here. I think it is a lesson which says we can

turn around no matter how far we have gone and come back to the Father. It is a message of hope. It is a message of a second chance. The Bible says: “So he got up and went to his father.”

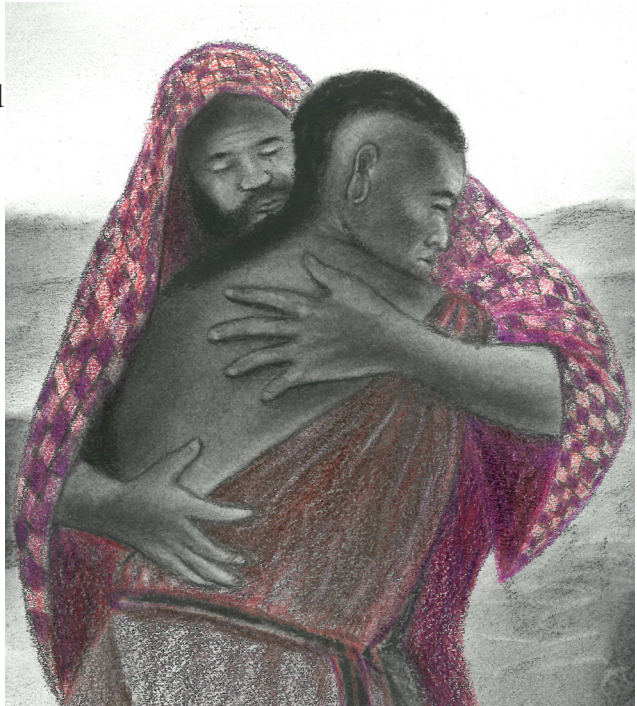
The son made a decision to go home, and we can make that decision too. We have to reach that point where we decide to turn our back on our sin and set off for the Father. When you look at the story of the prodigal son you learn that no matter how far you go, the love of the Father is always open for you to come back home. God is able to redeem that which is lost and even lost in a terrible way and bring that person back. God is waiting for you, and He is willing to receive you back.

Experiencing The Father's Love

Jesus uses this parable to teach us about our Heavenly Father's love. The father honored the son's request even though it was shameful. The father looked for the son even while he was a long way off. The father's heart was filled with compassion for his lost son. The father ran to his son and embraced him. And the

father restored the son and invited him into a celebration and a new life. When we turn to the Father through Jesus Christ, God is ready to embrace you, to call you His child.

As the son comes home he is given three signs of sonship: a robe, a ring, and sandals on his feet. When the robe is wrapped around his shoulders, the father is covering his son with his love and protection. He is saying the boy is restored to his full position as a son. He is no longer clothed in rags, but now has the dignity of the righteous father. A ring is placed on the boy's finger as a symbol of the father's riches and the father's authority being given to the son. The son can now exercise the father's authority to do good in the land. And while the prodigal son had come home without any shoes, the Father says he is not to be treated as a servant or a slave, but as a



son. The sandals will not only protect his steps, but they are to help him to set out on a new way of life. The son who was lost is now found, and though he was dead in sin he is now brought to life. The community celebrates his return with a feast.

Living as Children of God

When you look at the whole scheme of the Lord's Prayer it begins with the person of God, Our Father who Art in Heaven. Then it comes to the purity of God or the holiness of God. God's relation-

“while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”

-Luke 15:20 (NLT)

ship with us is a holy relationship. We call it holy love.

Once we return to the father we are not meant to keep sinning. We are not to stay destroyed in sin or to live a failing life. We are meant to live a victorious, holy life as true children of God.

The Bible puts it clearly, “be ye holy for I am Holy.” In purifying our relationship with Him and our relationship with others, God invites us to be holy as He is holy.

The Bible calls us to a life of holiness and living a life of total love. It is the best of what Christianity is intended to be. You ask me what holiness is. The best way of describing holiness is to love God with all

your heart, mind, and strength and out of that vertical love with the Father you then have the horizontal love for your neighbor as yourself. This is the celebration of the Father’s love. It not only rescues us from sin and death, it moves us into a life of holiness.



Reflect:

Is there any way in which God is calling you to come back home?



Pray:

Talk to God about what you’ve been learning this week. Pray to God as your Heavenly Father and ask Him to let you experience His love, forgiveness, and embrace. Ask God to help you to live a holy and victorious life.