

THE HEALING OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Paul Kurts

Brace yourself. You are about to read a comment on the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son' (Luke 15: 11-31) that most likely you have never heard before. Yet, human history bears out that this is the way the story relates to all of us.

Most of us are familiar with the story Jesus told of a father who had two sons, and he divides his estate between them. The older son remains with the father and the younger son takes his part of the estate—money—and leaves home and spends his life in riotous living on wine, women, and song. So much so that he probably became an alcoholic, sex addict, drug addict, diseased, most likely maimed and partially blinded by his excesses. Not a pretty picture. But, human suffering and failure never are pretty.

Because of his now 'ruined' condition, the only employment he could find was slopping the hogs in an unfamiliar environment. Apparently, he was neither educated enough nor physically able to command greater and more respectful employment. He was hanging on to life by a thread.

After most of a lifetime, he realizes that there is security, protection, sustenance, and acceptance at his father's house. Most people require a lifetime to learn life's lessons, and this man was no exception. He is probably in middle age—maybe 40 to 60—when he 'comes to himself and his senses' and heads home.

I want you to note that when his father saw him far off he had compassion on his son. Let me describe this scene as it encompasses all of us. His father SAW him and had compassion on him. No spoken word yet, just years of being away from his son and now what he SEES evokes COMPASSION on his son (or daughter as applicable). What did he see?

He saw a son in the distance barely able to walk. Tired. Dirty. Sore infested. Unkempt. Disheveled. Lame in one leg. Dragging a foot. An arm in a sling hanging limply at the man's side. One eye bandaged. A body racked in pain. A body emaciated from the lack of dietary necessities. And later to find out realizing his son's mind was confused and wandering from all the abuses he had subjected his body to. But he was HOME.

No matter what the father saw, he saw it through the eyes of LOVE and COMPASSION. This was his son who was lost, gone, alienated, away, and now he is home. The father weeps in drenching tears of joy.

Why did the father run to the son? I submit to you that the son was not able to run to the father in his condition. A myriad of emotions, questions, doubts,

weaknesses, and physical circumstances prevented his running to his father. He did not wait until he was WHOLE to come home; he came home TO GET WHOLE; TO BECOME WHOLE; TO BE HEALED.

The father realizes all these things and can't wait for the slowly moving son to painfully make his way to the father's house. The father is overjoyed at the sight of his son returning regardless of his condition. His son was JUST AS HE WAS. HE CAME. (Just like Charlotte Elliot's hymn, *Just As I Am*) And his dad was unconditionally accepting of his lost son. So, he RAN to embrace his dear son who was back. Never mind the condition. The father's love and forgiveness already covered EVERYTHING.

Nothing mattered in this son's past. No addictions mattered. No indiscretions mattered. No shortcomings or failures mattered. No weaknesses mattered. No sins mattered. No physical impairments mattered. The son was home and there was healing and health to be received at his father's house. His dad runs to embrace his son, and the healing began.

The father threw a celebration not for what the son had done in his life, but for what was now going to take place in the NEW LIFE he would have by in fact starting over in his father's house. Unconditionally loved. Unconditionally accepted. Embraced as the son the father had always dreamed of having back.. And now he was!

Do you see yourself in this story? We all are the child who went our way in life. And our Father waits for us to come home. When He sees us coming, He will RUN TO US. UNCONDITIONALLY LOVING US. FOREVER.