

Lenten Reflection

Saturday, Second Week of Lent March 18, 2017



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The parable of the Prodigal Son could be about any of us. For many years, it was my story. I was the prodigal daughter.

In the parable, the young man had a good home, a home with a promised inheritance. Yet he wanted to leave that home. I was a churchgoer, a believer. I had a good home with God. Yet I wanted to leave that home for the attractions and self-centered freedoms of the secular world.

In time, the young man's prodigal life spiraled down to the point in which he even desired to eat the inedible pods fed to the pigs. As my prodigal life spiraled down, I sought spiritual food. However, like those inedible pods, it was the spiritually inedible food of astrology and spiritualism.

The young man in the parable decides to repent and return to his father, hoping for a bit of solace and welcome. I cannot say that my return was initiated by me. I was lovingly lured by our Provident God to repent and return to my true home.

We may think that the parable is primarily a morality lesson about turning away from a wanton lifestyle. It is so much more. Yes, my returning to my Lord is huge. But the story is not only about the prodigal one. It is about our awesome Provident God. In the parable, the father runs to his wayward son, clothes him with the best robe, puts a ring on his finger, and gives a feast to celebrate his return. The father was ready and eager to welcome his son home.

That's our God, "ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." [Nehemiah 9:17] Gracious and merciful, he does not shame us. He waits for us to repent, to turn away from our sin. When we do, then "as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." [Psalm 103:12]

God, who gave me the freedom to wander, forgave me for turning away from him. All the while I was wandering, our Provident God, who was luring me back to his loving embrace, was ready to celebrate my coming home.

