

THE PRODIGAL SON

“The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.”

—LUKE 15:12

Father’s Day is a time when many fathers will reflect on their children, particularly if their children are in adolescence or young adulthood, and it has not been an easy time. These are vulnerable years, prone to rebellion, strife and dissension in relationships. Jesus told the parable of the ‘Prodigal Son’, which paints a beautiful picture of what our Heavenly Father is like in times such as these. ‘Prodigal’ means to be reckless and wasteful. The son was reckless and wasteful in a destructive way, while the father in a constructive, loving way.

The son’s request of his father to give him his share of the estate was highly offensive in Jewish culture as it suggests the son wants his father to die. But the father does not admonish him. He grants the request, gives his son the money and lets him go. Fathers know their sons, and this father knew his son was destined for trouble. Jesus tells us, “he set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living” (Luke 15:13). The freedom we give our children must include the possibility of going to a distant country. Anonymity can be a great cloak for sin, and for discovering what is really in the heart. The son eventually finds himself feeding pigs and longing for the pods he fed them. It would be very degrading for a

Jewish boy to work with pigs since to even touch their carcass is forbidden. This son was at rock bottom.

Jesus then tells us, “He came to his senses”. He is hungry, penniless and worse off than his father’s servants. He wants to go back, apologize and put the situation right by earning his keep, but the father faces a different issue. Jesus says, “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (15:20). The father does not mention squandered money, insult, or a far away country. He joyously welcomes him home and immediately plans a celebration. The son’s actions were only a symptom of the real issue the father faced, which was a broken relationship.

And that is the issue with God; not where we have been or what we have done, but putting our relationships right, and thereby right with Him. At rock bottom is often where God will meet with our children, and like the father in the Prodigal Son, we need to let them go, but be standing on the threshold ready to welcome them back.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I ask that You meet with my children, especially in times of distress. Be their refuge and safe passage home. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I praying God will bring my children into a relationship with Him?