

The Other Son

One of the most beautiful stories Jesus ever told was the story of the Prodigal Son. You are most likely familiar with the story. Jesus told His audience about a Father who had two sons and one of those sons demanded his inheritance. He then left home and lived a very loose life and before long had gone through all of the money. He was now broke and had not a friend in sight. He was working feeding pigs and remembered that the servants who worked for his father were better off than he. He determined then to return home and ask that he might join with his father's servants since he was no longer worthy to be called a son. As he walked down the road nearing his father's home, his father sees him approaching and runs to him and embraces his son. He calls for the servants to bring a ring for his hand and a new set of the finest clothes. And the father declares that it is time to rejoice because "my son who was lost has been found again!"

But the other son was jealous of his brother and resented all the attention he was receiving. No doubt he would have preferred that his brother work for a while and earn his position in the family. That he first prove himself worthy of his title. That he serve a period of penance if you will, before he was completely restored. I have no doubt the elder son was a good man but he was a narrow man. Just like thousands of Jews in his day and just like thousands of Christians today, who look with jealous suspicion upon those who lost their way but have now come home.

There are thousands who have wandered away from the fold. There are more than we can count who are out there feeding the pigs. They have lost all. They are hungry and broken. They have been crushed and wounded. They have been betrayed and forsaken. But oh my friend, they are still sons! And the father is tenderly calling them home. Everyday and every passing moment he yearns for their return. His eyes are ever searching the road for the struggling son limping home. He longs to restore them to their heritage. To place a ring upon their hands and cover their shame with a new robe. To kill the fatted calf and celebrate!

But sometimes those who have never left the church make it hard for our brothers to return. They would have them come home but not immediately restored to all of the benefits of son-ship. They would have our brothers earn back the ring and the robe. It's as if some think there is seniority in the Body of Christ. But "he that is first shall be last, and he that is last shall be first." You see none of us earned our son-ship to begin with. We are all here only the grace of our Father. So instead of standing in the shadows filled with jealousy, run to your brother! And welcome him home!