

Al & Debbie Goodman

March 3, 2018

Al:

Today's reading of the Prodigal Son or the Lost Son, is only found in the Gospel of Luke. It is the third parable of a series of three that Jesus used to demonstrate what it means to be lost, how our heavenly father celebrates with joy when the lost are found and how God longs to save his creations. This is a story concerning redemptive grace and the mercy shown to a repenting son.

This simple story describes the son's prodigal use of his inheritance in a foreign land and his eventual reduction to working with swine, to the extent he longed to eat what he was feeding to them. His misery leads to an epiphany for the destitute and starving young man. He decides to return home and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers." *

Debbie:

In this parable, the father represents God, the youngest son, a repenting sinner, and the oldest son represents the Pharisees and Scribes. The Pharisees and Scribes maintained that it was improper to associate with sinners. Jesus clearly refutes this message in the Parable.

I would like to focus on the father. Luke's gospel says, "While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion." As I ponder this verse, I wonder, did his father just happen to glance up and see his son coming down the road "a long way off?" Or rather, was he watching and waiting all day every day, for his son to return. I believe when we sin and turn away from God, he is always there, waiting and watching for our return and ready to welcome us back.

Peace be with you!

**Note: For historical context, in the Jewish culture of that day, asking for your inheritance was highly insulting to the father. To do what the youngest son did, would have not allowed his return to the family and would have resulted in turmoil and the possible stoning of the wayward son.*

This simple story that Jesus used to illustrate a spiritual lesson, describes the son's prodigal use of his inheritance in a foreign land and his eventual reduction to working with swine, to the extent he longed to eat what he was feeding to them. This situation depicted the height of humiliation for a Jew, since pigs were deemed unclean by dietary laws. They were not allowed to touch them or eat them.