

*For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies for the love which from our birth over and around us lies*

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

What does the word prodigal mean? According to Webster it means extravagant, wasteful or to squander. So we might ask what this parable is about. Is this parable about the son who is foolish, the son who is angry or the father?

The son who takes his inheritance exemplifies for us, all of the foolishness of man.

We need only look around and see the beauty of the Created Order and recognize how foolish many are in not recognizing the Creator in witnessing the creation.

We need only to take a deep breath to feel alive and recognize the health we have been given that we so often take for granted.

We can look at our family and friends to recognize how richly we have been blessed

We need only be still for one moment and look within our hearts to find the Spirit of God that has been given to us to gift us with faith

We need only to look into the eyes of our children or grandchildren and see the continuation of God's Blessing's poured upon us.

All of these things God has given to us and if that were not enough God, through the work of His Son has given us the promise of eternal life. But for many all this is not enough – They want more. And they seek more in the empty promises of the world. These who seek more are the prodigal son.

There is also in this reading the ungrateful son, the angry son. This son exemplifies for the anger and greed of the many that live in this world.

He looks around at what he has been given, what he has done and he can only see that others have more and have done less.

Feeling cheated the angry son lacks the ability to be joyful, for his anger is consuming him.

He takes for granted the health he has, the wisdom he has been given in working and being faithful.

Now the question for us to ponder is who are we? What character in this event do we most closely resemble?

Have we squandered all that was given us? Have we failed to use what we have in a constructive and life giving manner.

And I don't mean have we made mistakes or done something that was upon later reflection we understand was foolish, but have we with deliberation set out to use and misuse what we have? If so we are the prodigal son and we would do well to follow the path that he walked back to the Father.

Do we covet what others have? Are we envious of others success? Do we share freely what we have been given? Are we judgmental of what others do?

AND NOTE: I said judgmental, not judge. For certainly we are to judge, but what we are to judge is what **we** do and how **we** act. And what thought we have as **we** make decisions on our actions and deeds.

So if we covet and envy others then we are the angry, ungrateful son who could not enter into the joy of his father.

We have not talked much yet about the third character in this parable, the loving father. I would like to think I can identify not with either son, but with the father. I would like to think so knowing that I do not always measure up. The question that we might ask is: Can I rejoice that God has blessed every man?

Can I freely with no reservations, with no thought in my mind that if I rejoice with their blessing; God will reward me for my “Christian Attitude” Can we honestly say yes to this question. If so we are acting like the father who is for us the character which reminds us of God our Father.

God our Father who freely gives us so much, knowing that we will at times be foolish, ungrateful and wasteful. Our Heavenly Father who is always pouring His Grace upon us, even when we have turned from Him. When we think we have lost everything, when we are so far from Him, His Grace leads us home.

God is always far more willing to give to us than we are to humble ourselves by asking. God is always more willing to forgive that we are to fall to our knees and repent. He is more willing to rejoice that we have returned to him than we are to admit our faults and accept His gift.

What we learn in this parable is not about the nature of man, for we can see all around us and in our own lives, how foolish we can be. We know how jealous we can be or other are over the success of another person. Over a blessing or honor they receive that they believe is rightfully theirs.

We know that we judge others and don't think they receive the punishments they deserve. And we must address all these issues in our own lives.

**But today** – The parable of the prodigal son leads us to consider not the faults of the sons, but the richness of the Father's Love.

In this beautiful place – on this wonderful day – can we spend a few moments just looking around and being aware of the many blessings we have been given? Can we offer our thanksgiving for all that we have and the love we share?

For it is God the Father who gives all this to us and it is meet and right that we should offer Him our Prayers and Praise.

AMEN