

ARE FINDING FAULT WITH ME FOR DOING WHAT EVERY NORMAL HUMAN INSTINCT WOULD LEAD ANYONE TO DO. IS IT IMMORAL IN ME TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE PRODIGAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE A FLESHLY MESS OF THINGS? BUT YOU PHARISEES, WHAT SORT OF RELIGION DO YOU HAVE? A RELIGION THAT CARES NOTHING ABOUT LOST PEOPLE? YOU HAVE SAID WHAT YOU THINK OF ME, VERY WELL. NOW LET ME SAY WHAT I THINK OF YOU. STAND UP, WHILE I DRAW YOUR PORTRAIT!

THE ELDER SON WAS IN THE FIELD:

WE STUDY VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE ELDER SON. WE NEARLY ALWAYS THINK OF HIM AS AN ANTI-CLIMAX. WE USUALLY STOP WITH THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL. FEELING THAT IF WE COULD PERSUADE ALL THE PRODIGALS TO REPENT OUR EVANGELISTIC OBLIGATION WOULD BE FULFILLED. WE USUALLY THINK OF HIM AS A MAN WHO DID PRETTY WELL, CERTAINLY IN CONTRAST WITH HIS BROTHER. HE WAS AT LEAST RESPECTABLE: HE HAD STAYED DECENTLY AT HOME. HE HAD SOME VIRTUES OUR AGE ADMIRES VERY MUCH. HE WAS THRIFTY, INDUSTRIOUS, DEPENDABLE, ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ROTARY CLUB, ON THE BOARD OF DEACONS IN HIS CHURCH. THAT IS WHAT A LOW ESTIMATE OF CHRISTIANITY DOES. WE MAKE A GREAT MISTAKE WHEN WE SET THIS RESPECTABLE ELDER BROTHER UP AS THE BRIGHT BACKGROUND

LUKE 15: 25 - 32

1. THE YOUNGER BROTHER BECOMING AN OUTCAST. HIS SINFUL CONDITION.

2. HIS DECISION TO COME HOME.

a. GREETED BY HIS FATHER.

b. THE ROBE - RING - SHOES - FATTED CALF.

vs. 24. SON WAS DEAD, NOW ALIVE - WAS LOST, NOW FOUND.

(NOTE) THIS IS USUALLY THE STOPPING PLACE.

1. JESUS DIDN'T STOP HERE. HE WENT ON TO DESCRIBE ANOTHER SINNER. THE FELLOW WHO STAYED AT HOME. REMEMBER WHY HE TOLD THE STORY IN THE FIRST PLACE? WHY HE TOLD THREE STORIES: THE STORY OF A LOST SHEEP, THE STORY OF A LOST COIN, AND THE STORY OF A LOST SON.

THE BREACH BETWEEN JESUS AND THE PHARISEES HAD BEEN WIDENING.

THEY SAID HIS CONDUCT WAS UNBECOMING A RELIGIOUS MAN FOR HE HAD COMPANIONSHIP WITH THE OUTCASTS. "THIS MAN EATETH WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS." SO HE SPOKE THIS PARABLE UNTO THEM.

WHAT MAN OF YOU, HAVING A HUNDRED SHEEP, IF HE LOSE ONE DOTH NOT LEAVE THE NINETY AND NINE TO GO AFTER THAT WHICH IS LOST? OR WHEN PEOPLE LOSE MONEY, IS IT NOT A NORMAL HUMAN INSTINCT TO SEARCH FOR IT UNTIL IT IS FOUND? AND WHEN IT COMES TO HUMAN LIFE IN ANY DECENT HOME, WHAT FATHER AMONG YOU WOULD NOT FEEL AS THIS FATHER FELT, WHEN HIS WAYWARD BOY CAME BACK? IN OTHER WORDS, JESUS IS SAYING, IN EFFECT, "YOU PHARISEES