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One of the most well known parables of the gospels is the parable of the prodigal son. We find it in Luke’s gospel where, starting from 15:11 we read:

Luke 15:11-24

“Then He [the Lord Jesus] said: "A certain man had two sons. "And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. "Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. "But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." And he arose and came to his father. BUT WHEN HE WAS STILL A GREAT WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM AND HAD COMPASSION, AND RAN AND FELL ON HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM. "And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son. BUT THE FATHER SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, BRING OUT THE BEST ROBE AND PUT IT ON HIM, AND PUT A RING ON HIS HAND AND SANDALS ON HIS FEET. AND BRING THE FATTED CALF HERE AND KILL IT, AND LET US EAT AND BE MERRY; FOR THIS MY SON WAS DEAD AND IS ALIVE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST AND IS FOUND. AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY.”

The Son of God came to find and save the lost (Matthew 18:11). The one that comes to Him will never be cast out, says the Word (John 6:37). It does not matter what
one has done or not. It does not matter what is his/her past. What the Son of God wants is not to condemn but to save (John 3:17). The compassion of the father of this parable is a figure of the compassion of the Father God (Jesus said the parable in relation of the joy occurring in heaven, when a sinner returns). God “wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4).

The son of this parable could not wait for his father to die. He wanted the property right and then, though his father was still alive. Once he put his hands on it, gathered all together and left for a “far country”. Who knows what he might have heard for this country. Advertisements, TV, radio (if they existed) would speak for this country. If he had lots of money, he could live the “big life” there – the “big life” the Word of God describes with two words: “prodigal living”. At the end, the balloon blow out and the once son-of-a-rich-father, became poor and hungry. His hunger was actually so much that he didn’t have anything to eat - the pigs were fed more than him!

And then, something critical happened: “he came to himself” and he thought: “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” The prodigal came to himself! The time that one “comes to himself” is usually not the time that everything goes well, but the time that, as with this son, he may not even have pots to satisfy his hunger. The son came therefore to himself and took the way of return to his home. All the thoughts he made were right and just: after what he had done, he had no right to be called a son of this father. He had eaten up his labours by living prodigally. Yet the Father saw him from afar. This shows that he was watching the road. Though the son had taken his inheritance and left the home, the father was not indifferent. He was waiting day after day for him to return. If he could find him, he would go and plead him to come back - as the Lord pleads us to be reconciled with Him (II Corinthians 5:20-21). The Father was waiting. He was watching the road, and as soon as he saw his son coming, he RAN to meet him! Really what a touching picture: a father running to hug and kiss a son that ate up his property by living prodigally. However, is it not the same with God? We were dead in sins and trespasses,
children of wrath, and yet He saved us, He raised us together with Christ and He sited us with Him in the heavenlies. Not because of our works (we were dead) BUT BECAUSE OF THE MULTITUDE OF HIS LOVE (Ephesians 2:4). As the father of the parable, God waits for the lost sheep, and when one returns, HE RUNS TO HUG HIM/HER AND KISS THEM. THE FATHER FORGETS AND DELETES ALL THE PAST OF EVERY SON THAT RETURNS. HE WILL NOT BRING TO JUDGEMENT ANY BELIEVER, ANY SHEEP THAT RETURNED, FOR WHAT WAS DONE IN THE TIME HE WAS LOST. “IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD ALL THINGS HAVE BECOME NEW” (II Corinthians 5:17) says the Word of God. So, the father of the parable instead of kicking out his son – as many fathers do when they find out the rebellions of their children, even though they may have repented – instead of putting him in a trial period, he hugged him, he kissed him and killed the fattest calf he had – ALL STARTED TO BE MERRY. Similar is the joy in heaven when a sinner returns. What the Lord desires is not the condemnation of the sinner. If you have been told that God waits with a stock whip if you turn to Him, please hear this: GOD IS WAITING FOR YOU LIKE THE FATHER OF THE PRODIGAL SON. HE WAITS FOR YOU AND ONCE HE SEES YOU COMING, HE RUNS TO HUG YOU, KISS YOU AND START A BRIGHT CELEBRATION FOR YOUR RETURN. “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance” (Luke 15:7)

Tassos Kioulachoglou