

“The Prodigal Father”

Luke 15:1-32

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By Rebecca Enney

Jesus told this story that we have come to call the story of the Prodigal Son. There was a father with two sons. One was a ‘good’ son and one was a ‘bad’ son. The good son stayed home and worked hard on the farm every day. He always helped his father. The bad son got tired of the hard work on the farm, so he asked his father for his share of money and then the bad son left home. He went to far away places and did things he should not have done. He squandered his money in dissolute living. And he became poor and hungry. He got the worst job as a hired hand on a farm, feeding the pigs. Sometimes the only food he had to eat was what was left over from the pig’s slop! That’s not good!

One day the bad son woke up and said “What have I done? Maybe I could go back to work on my father’s farm, not as a son, but as a poor hired hand. It would be better than this.” While the bad son traveled back to the land of his father’s farm, he practiced what he would say: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am not worthy to be called your son.”

Do you know what the father did when his bad son came back home?! He threw his arms around his long lost son, the son whom we called ‘bad’. The father ordered a big party with lots of food and music and dancing in celebration and he forgave his son all his sins. Everything old passed away and everything became new! This is also what God does for us.

Now I want to tell YOU a story that I have called the story of the Prodigal Father. There was a son who had two fathers, so to speak. You see, Barabas can only remember living with Uncle Floyd. Uncle Floyd has been a wonderful father to his nephew Barabas. But Barabas also has another father, his ‘real’ father, Frank. You could say that Uncle Floyd was the ‘good’ father and Frank was the ‘bad’ father.

Uncle Floyd loves Barabas. He always helps Barabas with his homework. He cooks all the meals and he listens to Barabas say his prayers and tucks him into bed every night. Uncle Floyd loves Barabas.

Frank, many years ago, when Barabas was just a little baby, caused great heartbreak. Frank was often drunk. His driver’s license was even taken away. One night, when Frank was very drunk, he ordered his wife and baby son to get into the car with him, even without a driver’s license. Frank drove very carelessly and recklessly. And there was a terrible accident. This is a sad story, because Frank’s wife died in that accident. Frank’s wife was Barabas’s mommy! And Barabas was seriously hurt and was in the hospital for a long time. Frank was sent to jail for years. When Barabas got better he went to live with Uncle Floyd. You can still see the scar on the side of his face from that terrible car crash.

One day in prison when Frank woke up, he said to himself “I have been an unworthy father. When I leave here, I will ask my brother Uncle Floyd to adopt my son Barabas. I will travel far away to get a job so that I will not interfere with Uncle Floyd. I will visit my son only a few times each year. This will be best for Barabas.”

And so it came to pass that last year at Easter time, Frank was indeed released from prison. He went 3000 miles west to CA where he got a job as a janitor at Disney Internet Group on Lenkershim Blvd. in North Hollywood. See him over there. And last Christmas Frank came home to be reunited with his son Barabas. As Frank traveled back to PA he practiced what he would say: “Son, I have failed as a father. I thank God every day that Uncle Floyd is such a good father to you.”

Do you know what Barabas did when he was reunited with his father last Christmas? Well, they sat down to a really good meal that Uncle Floyd prepared. They played Christmas carols on the CD player. And they played Parcheesi! It was kind of like a small party. And Barabas and his father became reacquainted.



This is what God asks us to do. God asks us to love both the good and the bad people. He asks us to give the bad people the opportunity for a new beginning. As it says in 2 Corinthians: “Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” Both the prodigal son and the prodigal father have been forgiven.
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