

Preacher's Pen points

Come Home!



I could not help but wonder about the sign prominently displayed in front of a business near our home. It read, “Lauren, Daddy hasn’t given up on you. We love you too”. My mind began to explore what circumstances might have prompted this mysterious message that Lauren must have surely understood. I imagined that it was based on a broken relationship between Lauren and her family, that she was estranged from her father and from her family. Consequently, the family found this way to reach out to her, affirming their father’s patience and their family love.

A Sinner Away from Home!

As I contemplated the message and its possible background my mind turned to a spiritual application. I thought of the family of God; I thought of the numerous children of God who once were in close fellowship with the heavenly father and with their brothers and sisters who now are far from home. I thought of what we might say to them to encourage them to return. And it seemed that that family’s message might be the same one we might offer to those who have left their faithful service to God to live in sin.

A Father Who Won’t Give Up!

Jesus by way of a parable (Luke 15:11-32) sought to impress upon his critics that their judgmental attitudes toward him in associating with the wayward was far from the attitude of the Heavenly Father Himself. Though it is sometimes called the parable of the prodigal son, it is really more a parable about the father of the prodigal. And the point of the parable is clear and powerful—though God’s children may foolishly leave Him and seek happiness in another way of life, He is always eager for their return to Him. He mourns

over their sinful life and longs for their repentance. His joy upon their return is more than the joy of knowing of many who need no repentance (Lk. 15:7,10).

A Family Who Affirms Their Love!

The parable of the prodigal is also about self-righteousness and judgmental human beings. The older brother in the parable reveals the same spirit as the scribes and Pharisees who criticized Jesus for his association with sinners. Their approach to the sinner was to condemn him in self-righteousness and with a lack of compassion. The older brother revealed his true spirit when he refused to enter into the celebrations upon his brother’s return. Instead he withdrew in resentment because the family had rejoiced so much in the return of a sinful brother. Had that elder brother had the heart of his father he would have joyously welcomed his brother back home and celebrated his repentance along with the father.

A Plea To the Wayward!

Surely those who have turned away from the Lord are in a serious condition. Those who have been saved and who have become entangled again in sin are worse off than they were before they became disciples (2 Pet. 2:20-22). In this condition there awaits for them “*the fury of fire that consumes the adversary*” (Heb. 10:27). That much is certain.

But what shall we say to them? How shall we bring them back into the fold? The answer seemed obvious to a loving family. It should seem just as obvious to us. To those who have not yet returned home to God we offer the same appeal: “Father hasn’t given up on you! We love you too”. Please, come home! —Johnny Felker