

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

April 18, 2021

Call to Worship: Psalm 32:7

“You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.”

Greetings: "Good Morning"

We welcome our guests and visitors

Announcements:

Prayer of Approach:

Our Father, and our God, we are met this day to worship You, to confess our sin, to plead with you for the well-being of ourselves and others, to offer to You our gifts and to share in the fellowship of Your people. We are met to hear the proclamation of your Word and thereby to equip ourselves for ministry in the world. We believe all of these purposes to be in keeping with Your divine will, and therefore seek Your blessing upon us as we assemble and pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Hymn & Songs:

His Tithes and Our Gifts & Offering: 2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”

Offering Prayer:

Bless Thou the gifts our hands have brought; Bless Thou the work our hearts have planned; Ours is the faith, the will the thought; The rest O God, is in Thy Hand. AMEN

Responsive Reading: Psalm 32

L: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

P: Happy are those whose sin the LORD does not count against him.

L: I acknowledged my sin to you, and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

P: Let all who are faithful offer prayer to you;

L: At a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

P: You are my hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;

L: God will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;

P: The wicked are tormented by much, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

L: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,

P: And shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Children's:

Worship in Song:

Congregational Prayer & Lord's Prayer: "Our Father" Our Father, Which Art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Forever and ever. AMEN

Song:

Message: “Lover of the Lost” Monologue

Introduction:

- Many read the Parable of the Prodigal son and stop at the story of the “Other Brother.” In truth we can do this and come away with a great story that known world wide as a tale of being happy with what one has. But the real truth of this parable is that it is primarily about the “Other Brother.” He represents those who have been following God for a long time, but are

stuck in their task, and rigid in their belief. And even that is not true. The real meaning the Parable is that it is about the father.

Therefore it is about God, who waits for us all, humbles himself and comes to our aid, even in our stubborn foolishness, and calls us home to Himself.

a: Monologue Part 1: The Younger Brother Speaks:

- Oh, Father, I have sinned against you. I should never have left. I've made a mess of things. I've lost my part of the family estate. I have shamed you and our good family name acting like a fool in the far country. I am no longer worthy to be your son. You have every right to disown me. I have been acting like I am no-good. A nobody. I am nothing. Make me a slave, just your lowest slave. I'll work hard for you. I will do anything to be a part of your household again. Make me whatever you wish.
- (Picks up robe.) What's this? A robe! Surely this is not for me. This is your best robe. This is yours, father. I represents you. And this household. And your name. You want me to put it on?

(Puts it on.) Oh, Father, it's beautiful. It covers these rags from the far country.

- (Picks up ring.) A. . . a ring? Surely you are not giving the ring! This means you are giving me back my authority. You are grafting me back into the family. But I have already wasted my part. I do not deserve any more. Father, there is power in this ring. (Slips ring on finger.)
- (Put on shoes) And sandals! Shoes are for sons! Slaves go barefooted, but these shoes mean I am free. I'm not sure I can handle freedom, Father. I won't mess things up again. (Puts on sandals)
- Is this feast for me? Father, you have killed fatted calf! It's true I am hungry, but you have prepared a banquet! Everyone is celebrating! Why? Why do you have such love for me, Father? Why are you doing all this for me when I have been such a discredit to you and my family?
- I love you, Father. I love you more than I ever thought I did.

You are more than a father to me. You are my saviour. You are my rescuer. My redeemer

- Of course, you know who I am. I'm the one you often call the Prodigal Son, and what a fitting title it is. I was the most extravagant and wasteful person you can imagine. Not only did I waste a great portion of my father's wealth, I wasted me. My talents, my character, my personality were being thrown away into emptiness. I became a slave to my passions, to my fears, to my money, and to everybody from whom I could get attention.
- (Tenderly) Have you been to the far country? Maybe you are there now. Perhaps you are searching to add some zest and meaning to your life. But I stand here to tell you, it's not out there. There is nothing in the far country of sin but misery and disgrace. I know... I have been there. The great God of the universe is calling you back. There is a place for you at the Father's house. There is a robe of righteousness, the ring of royalty, the shoes of salvation, and the feast of celebration.

Come join the Father's embrace. (He exits.)

B. Meanwhile... Back on the farm (as they say): The Older Brother Speaks

- Stupid, stupid, stupid brother! Here I am doing all this all by myself. Just like I've always done. All by myself. You would think I was an only child. My brother! The arrogance! The presumption! How did he ever think he had the right to take that which was not his? Can you imagine my younger brother went directly to my dear father and forced him to give up the inheritance that he just couldn't wait to get his grubby little hands on. What was going through his head? How could he think that? It has been almost a year and I am still sputtering about him. I'm still so mad at him.
- I have a job to do. I always have a job to do. I have responsibilities. I have to keep this farm running. I have to protect our dad. I am suppose to be doing it with my brother. And here I am. I am all alone. I have the farm and the servants

and the animals and the house and the finances and it all comes back to me. It always comes back to me. I was born first. And I have a task to do.

- My lazy brother never did anything. My lazy brother never helped. My lazy brother messed up everything him put his hand on to. I'd still undergoing cleanup after the horses and cows. How hard would that be for anybody? How difficult is it to go and grab a shovel and start cleaning up the mess? But I would get there in the piles would be in the wrong place. The animals were all be in the wrong stalls. It was never done right. It was never done the way he was told to do it. So then I would get one of the servants to do it right.
- And the mouth. And the attitude. No respect at all. I was here first. I've been doing this now for many, many years. I know how this is to be done. I know what is the right way. And that lazy brother of mine never could get it right.
- And so I deserve to go away from the farm most afternoons. I

deserved time to myself. I earned the right to go and sit quietly. And so I disappear every now and then. I find a quiet spot to go to. Dad gave you the right to one third of all of his property to my brother. The rest is all mine. And I'm going to take what is mine.

- But now I'm being summoned back to the farmhouse. I've been called back home. Dad has sent for me. He's all excited. I'm not! Imagine. The lazy brother is back, and I have to return from where I'm comfortable to go and see him. Imagine that!
- They are throwing a party. The entire community is supposed to be there. I never had that sort of gathering. I never got the fatted calf for myself and my friends. I never got to be on display. I stayed here and I slaved. I worked. I remained. I am the loyal son. I deserve more. I am not going to go. I will not welcome my brother back. I will not make a party of that lazy hunk of nothing coming back to spoil everything that I worked for. It just won't happen.

- My father looks tired but very please as he comes toward me. There's a sad look in his eyes as he stares at me like a man who has already been through the same dance today. He tells me that he has already run to bring his son back home, and now has run up to bring me back home too. He tells me that while I am up here feeling very high and lofty about myself, but I too have allowed myself to disappear into a foreign land as did my brother. He tells me that I have too have left behind all things he taught us about love, commitment, joy, and peace. There is a sadness in my father's eyes that I last saw the day my brother left. In sadness my father tells me that says that I too have the same heart sickness as my brother. But then he tells me that my wayward heart is more dangerous than my brother's heart ever was. He tells me that I have become puffed up. In fact, he tells me that a lot of what my brother went through was because I was so arrogant and demanding and would not allow my brother to be himself. My father tells me that I walk around

with my chest puffed out. He tells me that I am full of pride. And that pride, my father says, has been poisoning the family. He tells me that while I did not run off like my brother, my attitude was just as dead.

- I want to argue with my father. I want to wrestle with his words. I want to deny everything that he is saying. But I hear the voice of my God speaking gently to my spirit. I hear the voice of the Lord dripping refreshing water over my overheated soul. I hear the voice of The Great I Am telling me that I am His precious child. Sigh. I too, just like my brother, have gone astray. I too have ended up in a foreign land. I too have ended up in a far country with nothing but misery and disgrace all around me. And for the first time, I am broken. Just then my father wraps his loving arms around me leads me back home to the party. I finally understand what it's like to not only be part of an earthly family, but more importantly to be a part of God's heavenly family.

- When you tell this story you will probably mention only my brother, or I will become known as “the other brother.” That is fine with me. I’ve learned that there’ll always be people that put their way of doing things above others, just like myself. And the attitude that goes along with it can be very toxic. I refuse to live like that now.
- Are you stuck? Are you walking in the way that you were taught but you too have forgotten to do all with love? Are you enslaved to traditions and a love of the past, but not opening your heart to the Father? When that happens you make others stuck. But the great God of the universe is calling you back. There is a place for you at the Father's house. There is a robe of righteousness, the ring of royalty, the shoes of salvation, and the feast of celebration. (Exits)

Conclusion:

- We have all done to God what both of the sons did to the father in the parable - we have all turned our back on God, and tried to

snatch the world from God's hands.

- Try as you might, you cannot escape God. The truth is what this world has to offer pales in comparison to what you will get with God. God will never leave you. The Lord loves all. He is waiting for the time when you turn back to Him.
- That is the love of the lover of the lost. The Holy Father of All.

Hymn:

Benediction: Romans 15:13 (NEB)

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace by your faith in him, until, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you overflow with hope.