

Luke 15

Luke 15:2 This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them

Milton R. Hunter

"In spite of the actions of his children, God has continuously retained his interest in them... With open arms he cried, 'All ye who are sick and weary come unto me, and I will give you rest.' Never before had the downtrodden, the outcast, and the discouraged of the human family received such a powerful ray of light to heal them of their afflictions and to turn them unto God and unto a better life as when they felt the power of the message of the Master. Even the sinner learned that he and life were important, and that there was hope for him to receive something more beautiful, more joyous, and more godly than he had hitherto experienced." (*Conference Report, October 1945, Afternoon Meeting 109.*)

Joseph Smith

"[The] dealing of God with individual men [is] always righteous. [They] always have access to [the] throne of God. . . . Servants of God of the last days, myself and those I have ordained, have the priesthood and a mission-to the publicans and sinners." (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 124.)

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine

Howard W. Hunter

"The Prophet Joseph Smith significantly altered one verse in the Joseph Smith Translation [of Luke 15:4-7]. It reads: 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, *and go into the wilderness after that which is lost*, until he find it?' (JST, Luke 15:4; emphasis added.)

"That translation suggests that the shepherd leave his secure flock and go out into the wilderness-that is, go out into the world after him who is lost. Lost from what? Lost from the flock where there is protection and security. I hope the message of that parable will be impressed on each of us who has priesthood responsibility.

"We should help those who have lost their way. What should we do to help those who have lost their way in the wilderness? ...We invite you to become involved in saving souls. Reach out to the less active and realize the joy that will come to you and those you help if you and they will take part in extending invitations to come back and feast at the table of the Lord.

"The Lord, our Good Shepherd, expects us to be his undershepherds and recover those who are struggling or are lost. We can't tell you how to do it, but as you become involved and seek inspiration, success will result from efforts in your areas, stakes, and wards." (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 218.)

Alexander B. Morrison

"Note the attention paid to the individual. It must have been at best a nuisance, and most likely dangerous, for the shepherd to leave the ninety and nine and go out into the wilderness to find the lost sheep. For one thing, wildernesses tend to be dangerous and lonely places, where unwary travelers can get into a great deal of trouble. And what about the worries the shepherd must have had as he thought about the flock left behind without a shepherd's care to safeguard its members from predators, accidents, acts of nature, and so on? After all, anyone who knows anything about sheep understands just how prone they are to get into trouble spontaneously, without anyone having to help them. I learned as a farm boy many years ago that sheep and trouble go together! Come to think of it, so, too, do people and trouble often go together!

"Whenever I think of the shepherd's loving and caring efforts on behalf of the one, I'm reminded of the Savior's deep and abiding love for each of us. Oh, how He rejoices when a lost soul is found by a faithful undershepherd and then is tenderly and lovingly brought home again! 'The worth of souls is great in the sight of God.' (D&C 18:10.)" ("Nourish the Flock of Christ," *Ensign*, May 1992, 14)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"Now, brethren, I ask each of you to please help in this undertaking. Your friendly ways are needed. Your sense of responsibility is needed. The Savior of all mankind left the ninety and nine to find the one lost. That one who was lost need not have become lost. But if he is out there somewhere in the shadows, and if it means leaving the ninety and nine, we must do so to find him. (See Luke 15:3-7.)

"Now, I think that is all I will say this evening about this, except to say that in my view nothing is of greater importance." ("Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 48)

Luke 15:4 leave the ninety and nine...and go after that which is lost

David O. McKay

"I ask you tonight, how did that sheep get lost? He was not rebellious. If you follow the comparison, the lamb was seeking its livelihood in a perfectly legitimate manner, but either stupidly, perhaps unconsciously, it followed the enticement of the field, the prospect of better grass until it got out beyond the fold and was lost.

"So we have those in the Church, young men and young women, who wander away from the fold in perfectly legitimate ways. They are seeking success, success in business, success in their professions, and before long they become disinterested in Church and finally disconnected from the fold; they have lost track of what true success is, perhaps stupidly, perhaps unconsciously, in some cases, perhaps willingly. They are blind to what constitutes true success." (*Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], 535.)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"There are so many young people who wander aimlessly and walk the tragic trail of drugs, gangs, immorality, and the whole brood of ills that accompany these things. There are widows who long for friendly voices and that spirit of anxious concern which speaks of love. There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them. With a little effort, many of them can be brought back to feast again at the table of the Lord.

"My brethren and sisters, I would hope, I would pray, that each of us ... would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and put them on the way of happy and productive lives" ("Reach with a Rescuing Hand," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86).

N. Eldon Tanner

"Every bishop, every stake president, every leader of any organization knows someone who needs attention, and you and we have the responsibility of going to find that lost sheep. If we had knowledge tonight that some young man was lost, if anyone knew of someone who was drowning, we wouldn't hesitate one minute to do all in our power to save that individual, to save the one who was lost, the one who was drowning, the one who was in need of our help. These young men and these older men who are inactive in the Church, who have strayed away from the Church because of inactivity or for any reason, need our help and need our attention just as much. They need our prayers and our consideration, and nothing will bring us greater joy and happiness than to see one come back into activity.

"By saving one, we might save a family. We might even save a generation. By losing one, we may lose not only the individual but a family and his posterity. The responsibility is great." ("Search for the Wanderers," *Ensign*, June 1971, 59)

Luke 15:8-10 The parable of the lost coin

Chieko Okazaki

"Jesus told this parable as one of three about lost things. The first was the parable of the lost sheep that had accidentally gone astray, not meaning to leave the flock but not paying attention to where its search for grass was taking it until it had gone out of sight and perhaps gotten itself into a difficulty that made it unable to come back without help. The third parable is the story of the prodigal son, who willfully chose to leave his father's house and then compounded this initial mistake with a series of other mistakes until he had squandered his inheritance, been reduced to fighting with pigs for enough food to keep from starving, and finally looked at his situation and exercised his agency to return to his father's house. And in the middle is the second parable, the parable of the lost coin.

"The situation of the coin is different. The coin was passive, inert. It had no agency to exercise; it was not seeking anything when it became lost. In fact, something the woman did must have contributed to its loss. Perhaps she tipped over the jar in which she kept her money and it rolled into a dark corner without her noticing as she gathered up the other nine coins. Perhaps it was lying on the table and the edge of her sleeve brushed it as she went quickly about her duties. Perhaps one of the children saw that it was bright and shiny and took it into a corner to play with. In any case, the

coin became separated from the rest of the treasure and was in danger of being overlooked and lost permanently. Fortunately, the woman noticed that it was missing and took the extraordinary action of lighting a candle to illuminate every dark corner; then she swept diligently until the coin tumbled back into visibility. Her attitude was obviously, 'As for me and my house, we're going to find this coin!'

"Now, in some ways, that may apply to the situation of some Latter-day Saints. You may feel that you're an ordinary coin, just like all the others in your ward and stake, but something happens—an accident, an oversight, insensitivity, carelessness on someone's part, a bitter word, or perhaps even deliberate maliciousness. But something gives you a push away from the other coins. You feel marginalized, ostracized, and shoved to the borders of your group. Maybe gravity or other social forces take over then, and you roll away into a dark corner.

"...[But after finding the lost coin] the woman called her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me' ("Luke 15:9 Luke 15:9). And the father of the prodigal son ordered a feast and merrymaking to mark the return of his lost son. Remember that rejoicing if there are moments when you feel lost, estranged, and pushed out to the margins of your ward or stake. You are never on the margins of the Father's love. You are always in his heart and in his hands." (*Sanctuary* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 43 - 44.)

Bruce R. McConkie

"The lost sheep strayed from the fold by choice, seeking green pastures and still waters out in the deserts of the world. But the lost coin, a silver drachma, was lost through the inattention of the officers of the kingdom. The Lord's servants neglected their responsibility to care for the needs of the saints, and one of the saintly coins slipped to the floor and rolled into the dust in a dark corner where, except for diligent search, it would remain lost until swept out with the refuse." (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 3: 247.)

Luke 15:8 what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not...seek diligently till she find it?

"Though it was several years ago, I can still recall the panic I felt that day as I searched my house for the misplaced envelope containing six hundred

dollars. Frantically, I dumped drawers and searched the desk where I usually put important papers.

"As the mother of three young children and the wife of a school teacher, I knew how much we needed that money. I knew how far off our next monthly payday was.

"I prayed, and so did our whole family. All our family prayers centered around pleas for help in locating that envelope, yet we received no answer. I wondered how I could have been so irresponsible. We needed that money in order to pay bills and buy food. Time passed, and each day frustration and fear took a greater hold on my spirit and my faith. The lost money occupied all my thoughts.

"A few weeks later on Sunday, I remembered that a visiting teaching message meeting would take place before Relief Society. I decided I would be better off at church than at home worrying about the money, and I managed to get all three children into the nursery and slip into my seat just as the teacher began her lesson. She was reading the parable of the lost piece of silver from the Bible. (See Luke 15:8-10.)

"Suddenly it was no longer just a parable, but an instant replay of the past three weeks at our house, where nothing had been left unturned and where I had spent long hours trying to reconstruct my actions.

"Then the Spirit whispered that while the Savior sought after the lost soul, I had been seeking the piece of silver. I realized that if I used the same energy to find the sisters I was assigned to visit that I had spent trying to find our six hundred dollars, I could truly magnify my visiting teaching calling.

"Tears ran down my cheeks as the lesson hit home, and I knew something good would still come of the experience. The panic and the self-recrimination were gone, and I knew through the peaceful reassurance of the Spirit that somehow all would be well.

"For the first time in weeks I felt really happy again. The children sensed a difference. When we got home, we all knelt together and four-year-old Spencer prayed once more that we would find our money.

"Then we got up, and with no conscious thought, went to our seldom-used front entry closet. There on the top shelf was a book with the envelope of

money sticking out of it. Prayers had been answered, a lesson taught, and the money recovered.

"Today, our two older children bear testimony to the younger ones that Heavenly Father does answer our prayers, and I understand in a much more personal way that the worth of souls is great in the sight of God." (Paula Schulthess Anderson, "Our 'Lost Coin,' " *Ensign*, Sept. 1987, 53-54)

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Gordon B. Hinckley

"I know of no more beautiful story in all literature than that found in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. It is the story of a repentant son and a forgiving father. It is the story of a son who wasted his inheritance in riotous living, rejecting his father's counsel, spurning those who loved him. When he had spent all, he was hungry and friendless, and 'when he came to himself' (Luke 15:17), he turned back to his father, who, on seeing him afar off, 'ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him' (Luke 15:20).

"I ask you to read that story. Every parent ought to read it again and again. It is large enough to encompass every household, and enough larger than that to encompass all mankind, for are we not all prodigal sons and daughters who need to repent and partake of the forgiving mercy of our Heavenly Father and then follow His example?" ("Of You It Is Required to Forgive," *Ensign*, June 1991, 5)

Bruce D. Porter

"The parable of the prodigal son is a parable of us all. It reminds us that we are, in some measure, prodigal sons and daughters of our Father in Heaven. For, as the Apostle Paul wrote, 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23).

"Like the errant son of the Savior's parable, we have come to 'a far country' (Luke 15:13) separated from our premortal home. Like the prodigal, we share in a divine inheritance, but by our sins we squander a portion thereof and experience a 'mighty famine' (Luke 15:14) of spirit. Like him, we learn through painful experience that worldly pleasures and pursuits are of no more worth than the husks of corn that swine eat. We yearn to be reconciled with our Father and return to his home." ("Redeemer of Israel," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 15)

Neal A. Maxwell

"We know who we are and where our 'home' really is. Hence, life, when properly lived, is really a journey 'back home.' In this narrow sense, we are somewhat like the prodigal son. As we come to ourselves, we, too, with determination will say, 'I will arise and go to my father.' (Luke 15:18.)" ("I Will Arise and Go to My Father," *Ensign*, Sept. 1993, 65)

Neal A. Maxwell

"...do we naively expect Christ to come to us-instead of our going to Him? Truly He waits 'all the day long' with open arms to receive the repentant. (2 Ne. 28:32; Morm. 6:17.) There are no restrictive 'office hours.' But it is we who must arise and go to Him! (See Luke 15:18.)" ("Lest Ye Be Wearied and Faint in Your Minds," *Ensign*, May 1991, 90)

Luke 15:16 he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him

Gordon B. Hinckley

"I am satisfied that there are thousands across the world who in their loneliness and hunger for truth are crying out for help... And in addition to these there is another group who are members of the Church in name, but who have left, and who now in their hearts long to return, but do not know how and are too timid to try. They, too, in moments of quiet reflection, ask, 'Why am I here? Why am I so lost? Please, please help me find my way.'"

"As I think of them I think also of one of the most beautiful stories ever told. (quotes Luke 15:11-24.)

"To you, my brethren and sisters, who have taken your spiritual inheritance and left, and now find an emptiness in your lives, the way is open for your return. Note the words of the parable of the Prodigal Son: 'And when he came to himself.' Have you not also reflected on your condition and circumstances, and longed to return?"

"The boy in the parable wanted only to be a servant in his father's house, but his father, seeing him afar off, ran to meet him and kissed him, put a robe on his back, a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and had a feast prepared for him. So it will be with you. If you will take the first timid step to

return, you will find open arms to greet you and warm friends to make you welcome.

"I think I know why some of you left. You were offended by a thoughtless individual who injured you, and you mistook his actions as representative of the Church. Or you may have moved from an area where you were known to an area where you were largely alone, and there grew up with only little knowledge of the Church. Or you may have been drawn to other company or habits which you felt were incompatible with association in the Church. Or you may have felt yourself wiser in the wisdom of the world than those of your Church associates, and with some air of disdain, withdrawn yourself from their company. I am not here to dwell on the reasons. I hope you will not. Put the past behind you. Said the prophet Isaiah in another age, with words that fit our own:

'Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;
Learn to do well. ...
Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.' (Isa. 1:16-19.)" ("Everything to Gain-Nothing to Lose," *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 95-96)

Luke 15:17 he came to himself

Something remarkable happens when the prodigal son finally hits rock bottom-his thoughts turn to his father. This is not an accident. Consider Alma the younger, who in the gall of bitterness and on the verge of destruction, could catch hold of only one crucial thought, 'While I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God' (Alma 36:17). When finally the prodigal comes to himself, thoughts of father and family predominate. As **Elder Maxwell** said, "the Holy Ghost preached to the prodigal from the pulpit of memory" (*Not My Will, But Thine*, 98.).

One prodigal daughter similarly thought of home, but only after she had hit rock bottom hard enough to knock her to her senses:

"In the midst of Linda's aimless wandering, thoughts of home flooded through her mind. She remembered the warmth and beauty of the place where Mother and Father showered her with love. She recalled many fond memories associated with brothers, sisters, and other members of the family circle. Moreover, she brooded over the feelings of peace and security that had once been hers when living within the quiet company of people who had extended unselfish love to her. Her heart yearned for home and the voice within cried, 'Go there!'" (Carlos E. Asay, *The Road to Somewhere: A Guide for Young Men and Women* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 123.)

The lesson for faithful fathers and mothers is to provide that stable, loving environment for their children. If a child has been taught the doctrines of the kingdom in a loving home, he will always take that with him. Though thousands of miles away, though the Spirit has been driven from his life, though mired down in the squalor of a modern swine pit, yet he will still be taught from the "pulpit of memory" and inevitably conclude, 'I will arise and go to my father.'

Vaughn J. Featherstone

"There is a great purging and humbling that comes from the wells of despair. False pride is stripped away. The light of home flickers dimly through the dark miles of distance. In the despair of this great, humbling experience, the young man 'came to himself.'" ("However Faint the Light May Glow," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 71)

Luke 15:18 I have sinned against heaven

One of the greatest challenges for families is to have a prodigal son or daughter. This parable teaches us a great lesson about patience and prayerful waiting. While mom and dad may be able to carry their lost sheep back to the fold, the most rebellious will not return with them. While parents and leaders can eventually find the lost coins and rejoice in their return, the proud prodigals reject all overtures. They must return on their own. They must figure out for themselves that they have 'sinned against heaven.'

What would have happened if the father in parable had made a great journey to find his lost son while the latter was still spending the inheritance? Lacking the necessary humility, the son would have rejected his father's loving request to return home. He may have vowed within himself never to stoop so low as to go back like a groveling beggar. Instead, the father wisely waited. Indeed,

prayerfully waiting at home was the only thing the father could do. For parents of prodigals, this can be the most difficult kind of action to take. **Marion D. Hanks** said:

"We cannot escape responsibility for our families and others whom we might touch, nor ever cease pulling for them and praying for them and trying to help them. If they make wrong decisions, follow the false programs that many of their peers pursue, still we will love them and suffer with them and work with them and wait for them, even as the father in the Lord's parable waited for the prodigal who finally came to his senses and headed home: 'When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' (Luke 15:20.) We will watch and pray, even as the Lord himself waits with godly mercy, as He declared through His prophet 2,700 years ago: 'And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.' (Isa. 30:18.)" ("Seeing the Five A's," *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 38)

Latter-day saints often underestimate the power of God in the salvation of his prodigal children. Those children born in the covenant or sealed to their parents have claim on special blessings. If parents have been true to their marriage covenants, their children are literally sealed to them by the power of the priesthood. Latter-day prophets have expounded on what this means.

Orson F. Whitney

"The **Prophet Joseph Smith** declared-and he never taught more comforting doctrine-that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God." (*Conference Report, April 1929, Third Day-Morning Meeting 110.*)

Brigham Young

"Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 208.)

Luke 15:20 when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him

"We can be Christians, followers of the lowly Nazarene who ate and drank with sinners. We can reach out, welcome people back, and help them feel the warmth and security they once knew. Alma the Younger took a major detour. But he returned and was welcomed back. Corianton left the strait and narrow path for a time, but he came back... (see Alma 49:29-30; 63:10). We can be forgiving and allow people to change. If Johnny strays from the path for a few years and disqualifies himself for a mission but eventually returns to the path, we can greet him joyfully. God can forgive him, and so must we. If Jennifer leaves the strait and narrow, loses her virtue, has a baby out of wedlock, but chooses eventually to come back to church, we can rejoice in her return. God can forgive her, and so must we. When people have repented, they want desperately to put the past behind them; we as followers of Christ are under covenant to help them do so." (Robert L. Millet, *When a Child Wanders* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996], 48 - 49.)

Neal A. Maxwell

"...[prodigal sons and daughters] need a warm welcome. Let us emulate the father of the prodigal son, who ran to greet his son while the son was still a great distance away, rather than waiting passively and then skeptically asking the son if he had merely come home to pick up his things!" ("The Net Gathers of Every Kind," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 14-15)

Jeffrey R. Holland

"The tender image of this boy's anxious, faithful father running to meet him and showering him with kisses is one of the most moving and

compassionate scenes in all of holy writ. It tells every child of God, wayward or otherwise, how much God wants us back in the protection of His arms." ("The Other Prodigal," *Ensign*, May 2002, 62)

Neil L. Andersen

"Do we understand our Heavenly Father's anxiousness at our every effort to return to him? Even when we are still a great way off, he welcomes our return. We experience joy as the love of our Savior assures us that we can yet be clean, that we will one day be home again. This happiness comes only through repentance. As we leave wrongdoing behind and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, we receive a remission of our sins. We sense that our Savior is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves." ("The Joy of Becoming Clean," *Ensign*, Apr. 1995, 51)

Luke 15:25 The Parable of the Jealous Son

Jeffrey R. Holland

"...being caught up in this younger son's story, we can miss, if we are not careful, the account of an elder son, for the opening line of the Savior's account reads, 'A certain man had *two* sons'-and He might have added, 'both of whom were lost and both of whom needed to come home.'

"The younger son has returned, a robe has been placed on his shoulders and a ring on his finger, when the older son comes on the scene. He has been dutifully, loyally working in the field, and now he is returning. The language of parallel journeys home, though from very different locations, is central to this story." ("The Other Prodigal," *Ensign*, May 2002, 62)

Howard W. Hunter

"Both brothers in the parable desperately need the Lord to free them of their burdens. This is the message of the parable. We learn from this parable that all of us, regardless of our status or condition, have an absolute need of the Lord's saving grace." (*Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament: The Four Gospels*, by Pinegar, Bassett, and Earl, p. 255)

Luke 15:28 he was angry, and would not go in

Once during a gospel doctrine discussion, a class member commented on this scripture. "The lesson," she declared, "is that sometimes we're too insensitive

to the feelings of others." Her point was that the father in the parable was at fault for being insensitive to the elder son's feelings. But who is at fault in the parable? Was the father insensitive? Should he have asked the elder son's permission to have a celebration for the prodigal son? The answer should be an obvious, "No!" In the parable, the father represents God the Father. The problem was with the elder son's attitude toward his brother. Furthermore, he misunderstood the blessings to which he was entitled as the faithful son. This is so often the case with the faithful.

Jeffrey R. Holland

"This son is not so much angry that the other has come home as he is angry that his parents are so happy about it. Feeling unappreciated and perhaps more than a little self-pity, this dutiful son-and he is *wonderfully* dutiful-forgets for a moment that he has never had to know filth or despair, fear or self-loathing. He forgets for a moment that every calf on the ranch is already his and so are all the robes in the closet and every ring in the drawer. He forgets for a moment that his faithfulness has been and always will be rewarded.

"No, he who has virtually everything, and who has in his hardworking, wonderful way earned it, lacks the one thing that might make him the complete man of the Lord he nearly is. He has yet to come to the compassion and mercy, the charitable breadth of vision to see that *this is not a rival returning*. It is his brother...

"Certainly this younger brother had been a prisoner-a prisoner of sin, stupidity, and a pigsty. But the older brother lives in some confinement, too. He has, as yet, been unable to break out of the prison of himself. He is haunted by the green-eyed monster of jealousy. He feels taken for granted by his father and disenfranchised by his brother, when neither is the case. He has fallen victim to a fictional affront. As such he is like Tantalus of Greek mythology-he is up to his chin in water, but he remains thirsty nevertheless. One who has heretofore presumably been very happy with his life and content with his good fortune suddenly feels very unhappy simply because another has had some good fortune as well.

"Who is it that whispers so subtly in our ear that a gift given to another somehow diminishes the blessings we have received? Who makes us feel that if God is smiling on another, then He surely must somehow be frowning on us? You and I both know who does this-it is the father of all lies. It is Lucifer...

"...Brothers and sisters, I testify that no one of us is less treasured or cherished of God than another. I testify that He loves each of us - insecurities, anxieties, self-image, and all. He doesn't measure our talents or our looks; He doesn't measure our professions or our possessions. He cheers on every runner, calling out that the race is against sin, *not* against each other. I know that if we will be faithful, there is a perfectly tailored robe of righteousness ready and waiting for *everyone*, 'robes ... made ... white in the blood of the Lamb.' (Rev. 7:14) May we encourage each other in our effort to win that prize is my earnest prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ("The Other Prodigal," *Ensign*, May 2002, 63-64)

Luke 15:31 Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine

Spencer W. Kimball

"In the impressive parable of the Prodigal Son the Lord taught us a remarkable lesson. This squanderer lived but for today. He spent his life in riotous living. He disregarded the commandments of God. His inheritance was expendable, and he spent it. He was never to enjoy it again, as it was irretrievably gone. No quantity of tears or regrets or remorse could bring it back. Even though his father forgave him and dined him and clothed him and kissed him, he could not give back to the profligate son that which had been dissipated. But the other brother, who had been faithful, loyal, righteous and constant, retained his inheritance, and the father reassured him: 'All that I have is thine.'

"...the father might have said something like this: 'Son, this is your estate - all of it. Everything is yours. Your brother has squandered his part. You have everything. He has nothing but employment and Our forgiveness and Our love. We can well afford to receive him graciously. We will not give him, your estate nor can we give him back all that he has foolishly squandered.' He did say: 'For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. . .' And he said also: 'Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine.'

"Is there not significance in that statement of the father? Does not that signify eternal life?" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], .308-309)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"Son thou art ever with me, and ALL that I have is thine.' Is not that a glorious promise? That is what the Lord has promised us if we live as he has commanded us to do. He said we would become heirs of the celestial kingdom and become his sons and daughters.

"We learn that there is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner who repents; but those who are faithful and transgress not any of the commandments, shall inherit 'ALL that our Father hath,' while those who might be sons and daughters but through their riotous living waste their inheritance, may come back through their repentance to salvation to be servants, not to inherit exaltation as sons and daughters of God. Some people think that wealth of worldly good is all that they need, others want power and position among their fellow men, but there is one inheritance which is worth more than all, it is the inheritance of eternal exaltation." (*Seek Ye Earnestly* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970], 89.)

Carlos E. Asay

"It is important that you keep in mind the miracle of forgiveness through the goodness and grace of our Savior. Many rejoice when the sinner comes to himself and repents. But it is also very important that you remember this unchanging truth: 'That man [or woman] who resists temptation and lives without sin is far better off than the man [or woman] who has fallen, no matter how repentant the latter may be. Ó How much better it is never to have committed the sin!' (*The Road to Somewhere: A Guide for Young Men and Women* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 123.)

Luke 15:32 it was meet that we should make merry...for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again

Neal A. Maxwell

"Seeing a prodigal return. To be a small part of seeing that happen is a marvelous thing. To see someone, in the words of scripture, who comes to himself and resolves that 'I will ... go to my father' [Luke 15:18] is a marvelous journey for someone to make. The joy comes in seeing someone who has been crusty and difficult to deal with become more meek, or to see a family really come to love and appreciate each other. Those are the real miracles. ... The most lasting miracles are the miracles of transformation in people's lives. These give one much joy, and while we can't cause these to happen, the Lord lets us, at times, be instrumental to

that process." (Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The Incomparable Blessings of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Oct. 1997, 49)

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