

October 13, 2019

Luke 15

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus]. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes **sinners** and eats with them.”

³ So [Jesus] told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

⁸ “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

¹¹ Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me **the share of the property that will belong to me.**’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have **FILLED HIMSELF WITH THE PODS THAT THE PIGS WERE EATING**; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself

The book of Luke: Things are not always as they seem. Sometimes what most hinders our perception of what God is doing is our own expectation of what God should do or would do. Luke writes his gospel account of the person and passion of Jesus of Nazareth for someone names Theophilus. The name in Greek means “One who loves God”. It is a name, and could also be a metaphorical name that Luke intends for all who seek to follow the Way of Jesus. Luke bases his account upon eyewitness accounts. That’s what he tells us in his introductory prologue chapter 1:1-4. He writes to invite and exhort others to place their trust and faith in Jesus as the Way to real life. Our section is in the middle of the gospel after Jesus has given numerous teachings and done some miraculous acts of healing. His renown is growing, the crowds are looking for him. And the other religious leaders are upset at his increasing fame, or his style and approach, or maybe envious, or maybe all of these.

sinners : ἁμαρτωλός pronounced “hamartōlós” meaning sinful or one who sins. It comes from the noun hamartánō, “to forfeit by missing the mark”) – properly, loss from falling short of what God approves, i.e. what is “wide of the mark”; a blatant sinner. The word implies that a sinner is anyone who is missing the mark of what God’s desires (the act of sin), not doing what God desires. In the gospels the other religious leaders often use this term to describe tax collectors, prostitutes and others rejected by larger society for their work or lifestyle.

the share of the property that will belong to me In those days, a father could either grant the inheritance before or after his death, but it was usually done after. The younger son asks for a special exception

FILLED HIMSELF WITH THE PODS THAT THE PIGS WERE EATING Pigs were, , considered unclean by Jews. Eating pork, even coming into physical contact was forbidden. This then is a act of desperation and complete debasement.

“The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them: ² Speak to the people of Israel,...
////saying:

he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; **he ran** and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get **the fattened calf** and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became **angry** and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF EXAMEN & CONTEMPLATION

- **What word, phrase or image grabs your attention?**
- **Look at the context in which the parables are told by Jesus. Who is he talking to, what is he trying to point those that hear him to?**
- **How does that word intersect with your life?**
- **When have you felt most welcome in a community? When have you felt the most excluded or forgotten?**
- **How and where do you hear an invitation from the Holy Spirit to life, act, or speak in today's text?**

..From among all the land animals, these are the creatures that you may eat. ³ Any animal that has divided hoofs and is cleft-footed and chews the cud—such you may eat. ⁴ *But among those that chew the cud or have divided hoofs, you shall not eat the following: the camel,..* ⁵ The rock badger, ... ⁶ The hare, .. ⁷ *The pig*, for even though it has divided hoofs and is cleft-footed, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. ⁸ *Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean for you."*

Leviticus 11

he ran: The world in which Jesus lived was much more relational than our own. Living in villages, rooted in agriculture, people knew each other more deeply. Plus there was nothing to watch on a device, etc. So you watched each other. The younger son has basically told the father "you're as good as dead to me." This unusual occurrence would be well known, the slight of the father made by the son would be common knowledge. To see the son and welcome him back would be quite a statement, publicly shirking off the dishonor paid to the father by the son. In the story the father not only publicly embraces the son that has brought shame upon his house, he does so running – maybe sobbing aloud, with tears of joy on his face – through the public area in full view of others – to welcome home this lost son.

the fattened calf: Calves were commonly made use of in sacrifices, and are therefore frequently mentioned in Scripture. The "fattened calf" was regarded as the choicest of animal food; it was frequently also offered as a special sacrifice (1 Samuel 28:24 ; Amos 6:4 ; Luke 15:23). We often overlook that when sacrificed the animals meat was then eaten in a "thanksgiving"-ish celebration meal for a family.

angry ὀργίζω pronounced as (or-gid'-zo):: meaning to be: angry, enraged, moved with anger. From *orge*; to provoke or enrage, i.e. (passively) become exasperated -- be angry (wroth).