

St. James Episcopal Church  
A Moment for Kids—of All Ages!  
MARCH 6, 2016—THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT  
THE PRODIGAL SON—*Luke 15:11-32*



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Jesus told the story of a father and two sons. The younger son asked his father to give him the inheritance that he would have gotten when his Father died. The Father gave his son the money, and he took the money and went to a distant country and wasted it all in wild living and parties and soon he was very poor. He worked at the only job he could get—feeding pigs. He was so poor and hungry that he wanted to eat the pigs' food. He knew that the people that worked for his father always had lots to eat, so he decided to go back to his father and tell his father that he had been very wrong and that he was sorry and wasn't worthy to be called his father's son. Even when he was a long way from the house his Father saw him and ran to meet him. The father was very happy to have his son back home. The father hugged his son and gave him new clothes, new shoes and a ring. He held a party with lots of food for his son. The other son was jealous! The father told him that he should be happy because the younger son had been lost and now he had been found. The father told the older son that he loved him too, just as much.

Have you ever been bad and expected that no one would ever love you again? But what did your Mom and Dad do? I'll bet they still loved you, and wanted you to be a part of their family. That's how God feels about us. **NO MATTER WHAT**, God loves us and forgives us. Isn't that a great feeling?

## BRINGING THE GOSPEL HOME: THOUGHTS FOR PARENTS

### **FAMILY CONVERSATION: TALKING ABOUT BOTH SONS**

The younger son demands his inheritance and wastes it. As a parent you probably see this as an extreme example of bad behavior. We have to remember that this is a parable—that it is telling us something very important about God and about ourselves. The point is NOT that we encourage our children to be wasteful and selfish and no matter what we'll be forgiven. This might be a good time to talk about the differences between forgiveness and consequences. God forgives us, but we still have to live with the consequences of our decisions. The younger son has already squandered his inheritance. What does that mean for his later years? We don't know and that's not the point of the story. The point is that the worst possible consequence of the son's actions (and our own) is that we may be separated from love—from those we love and from God. Forgiveness (by God and by each other) ensures that whatever else happens, we will not be separated from love.

The elder son in the parable is often forgotten. He is the one who stayed home and worked while the younger son went off to find adventure, fun, (but of course, eventually poverty and hunger.) The elder son is upset that the father welcomed the disobedient younger son back home so extravagantly. He's a bit jealous perhaps, and who can really blame him? But haven't we all been in both situations—receiving undeserved and unearned forgiveness as well as seeing someone get easily something we have worked hard for. We have to remember what the father said to the elder son. "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours." Both sons have the love and the compassion of the father.

### **Fill in the Blanks**

- There was a man who had two \_\_\_\_\_. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' *Luke 15:12*
- When he had spent \_\_\_\_\_, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. *Luke 15:14*
- He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him \_\_\_\_\_. *Luke 15:16*
- So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with \_\_\_\_\_; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. *Luke 15:20*

### **Dinner Table Conversation:**

*Have you ever been forgiven when you really hurt someone? How did that feel?*

*Have you ever seen someone "get a free pass" when they deserved to get into trouble?*

*How can we turn our jealousy around to compassion and love for the person who received the unexpected forgiveness? Wouldn't we want that for ourselves?*

*What is the difference between being forgiven and living with the consequences of our actions?*