

OUR COMPASSIONATE FATHER

Tuesday, February 10

Reading: Luke 15

Luke 15:20 *"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."*

One of Jesus' most famous parables is often called the parable of the Prodigal Son. It could just as easily be called the parable of the Loving Father. In this story, Jesus gives us another example of what He means by "our Father."

In the story, the father is a great picture of how God responds to us. When his younger son asks for his inheritance now, he calmly divides up his property. This was a slap in the face by this son as he is in effect saying, "I wish you were dead so I can get what's coming to me." It would take selling some things and diminishing future interest to give the son his request. Often God does the same for us.

The ending scene is very dramatic. The prodigal finally comes to his senses and returns home – ragged and penniless – having wasted his inheritance. His father sees him "while he was still a long way off." This implies that he had been looking for his son every day, waiting for him to return. Dignified men did not run in that day, but this father runs to embrace his wayward son. When the prodigal confesses his sin and declares his unworthiness to be called a son, the father ignores his plea to become a servant and dresses his boy in the finest clothes and holds a feast – because "this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (15:24).

Later, when the older brother is resentful and refuses to celebrate his brother's return, the father comes out to him and lovingly shows him why it was necessary to celebrate. What a wonderful picture of the rejoicing in heaven "over one sinner who repents" (15:7, 10)!

This is how Jesus describes "our Father." When we go our own way and squander the things He has given us, our heavenly Father waits until we learn our lesson and return to Him. He is longing for us to "come home" where He will forgive and shower us with His grace and love. Whether we have severely blown it (like the younger son) or simply have the wrong attitude (like the older brother), God has compassion and comes to us where we are and pleads with us to do better in our walk with Him.

Psalm 103:3 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him

How does this story help you understand God as "our Father?"

How have you experienced God's love and compassion in your life?