

HOMILY – TWO LOST SONS CALLED TO LOVE AND JOY - 6 MARCH 2016 - LENT 4th SUNDAY

DO WE CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE?

DO WE SHARE GOD'S JOY?

In Chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel we hear:

In the parable of the Lost Sheep, the shepherd SEARCHES in the wilderness until he finds the lost sheep.

In the parable of the Lost Coin, the woman SEARCHES thoroughly around the house for her lost coin.

In the parable of the two lost sons:

The younger son is already returning home when the father RUNS a distance to him.

The father SEARCHES for the older son who is nearby in the field.

After the finding of the sheep, the coin, the return of the younger son, there are CELEBRATIONS.

And the older son is invited back to the house for the celebration.

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The younger son is desperate, his motives are not perfect.

He plans his response, to admit his sin against heaven and against his father, so that he can get a job as a hired hand.

All the pain and disappointment that he has caused his father and brother.

In fact, he is not yet aware of the depth of his SIN against the LOVE of GOD and family for him.

It is ALL ABOUT HIM.

Yet he turns towards home, and is still far off when the father sees him and RUNS to greet him.

The father is MOVED, FILLED with COMPASSION.

This translates the Greek word here for the bowels being moved¹.

So much compassion that the body feels it.

The depth of love is with the father, so full of mercy and love.

The father embraces him and kisses him.

The father calls for the best robe, a ring and sandals, a fatted calf for his son.

The father is celebrating.

Can we show such a depth of love and mercy to others?

How do we honour someone who has offended us so much?

Do we celebrate someone's return, even if the offender is not perfect?

The older son is RESENTFUL.

He is JEALOUS of the father's love for the lost son.

How resentful? With a huge chip on his shoulder.

He refuses to be part of the father's JOY.

And yes, it is all about him. He has been loyal BUT.

The father comes out to search for the older son, who is not far away.

He invites him to come and celebrate and rejoice.

Both sons are selfish in different ways.

God shows us the WAY by example.
Jesus tells the parable but he shows us the WAY.
Later, when Jesus is on the cross in chapter 23/34 He says,

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

Extraordinary.

Do we ever take the time to ponder the incredible richness of God’s love?
Or are we too busy with everything having to be about us?
Are we like the younger son, WASTING our opportunities, selfish and completely self-absorbed, imperfect in our motives?
Are we like the older son who has been respectful to the father, until his jealousy, RESENTMENT and self-righteousness blind him?
Are we like both sons?
Why do we put up such barriers to God’s love?

Yet God still loves us and invites us to change.
We don’t have to do it all by ourselves – God will show us how.

How often do we thank God?
The father says ‘All I have is yours.’
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[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Homily – Two Sons Called to Love and Joy – 6 March 2016]
[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/030616-fourth-sunday-lent.cfm>]

ⁱ splagchnizomai: to be moved in the inward parts, i.e. to feel compassion
original word: *σπλαγχνίζομαι*, <http://biblehub.com/greek/4697.htm>