**Prodigal Son: Luke 15: 11-32**

Points to Stress:

1. The Father welcomes the lost son back with loving arms and even runs out to greet him – this is the Sacrament of Confession

2. The older son does not view his father as loving, but has a servant-master relationship with him

3. Which son are you? The younger son who lives in sin or the older son who is prideful and views God as a master. Neither view God as the loving father that he is.

Then he said, “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’ So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’ He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

Example:

Think about these two sons. The younger son essentially wants his father dead so he can have his money. He doesn’t care about or love his father, but just greedily wants the money. His father surprising gives it to him, and the younger son is off to live his party life! But soon he finds his party life left him empty and helpless. He is so desperate for food and money that he works with pigs, and even wants to eat their pig food. And pigs considered unclean for Jews. No good Jew would come close to a pig. This son finds himself at rock bottom. He doesn’t know where to go, but finally remembers his father and decides to go back to him. He knows he has sinned against his heaven and his father and deserves nothing, but has hope in his father’s mercy. He gets up and finally goes home. His father who has been watching ever since his son left, sees him from a distance and comes running toward him. The son doesn’t have time to confess all his sins before his father starts celebrating and welcoming home. His son finally has come back to him! This is like us sinning and walking away from God. When we sin, we go far from him. Sometimes we finally realize we have no where else to go and decide to come back and ask forgiveness. He is so excited that He has us back that there is great rejoicing! No matter what we’ve done, he loves us and just wants to be with us. We are the ones who walk away from him.

Now think about the older son. His brother finally is back home, but he isn’t happy. He isn’t happy his brother came back, but is more concerned that this son got a party thrown for him. The older son doesn’t even call him his brother. He tells his dad that he has served him all these years and followed his orders, but never got a goat to feast with his friends. This older son sees his dad as a master and him as the slave. He follows orders and serves him. He doesn’t love his father either, but does things only for obligation. He won’t even come inside to his brother’s party, but his father also goes out to meet him too. His father loves him and wants his love too, so he invites him in. It does not say if the older son joins the party. Will you?

What son are you? Do you need to go back to the Father in confession? Will you come into the party for your brother who returns home?