

March 8, 2016

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

On Sunday, our Gospel reading was the Parable of the Prodigal Son, that well-known story of a son who squanders his inheritance in “dissolute living,” and then, finding himself down-and-out, realizing his mistake, decides to return home.

As I listened to the reading in church, what caught my attention was the introduction to the parable:

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable...

Jesus told the parable for a reason, to teach those who were listening a lesson on compassion, forgiveness and welcome.

When the prodigal son returned, his older brother, who had remained home and loyal to their father, was full of anger and resentment at his younger brother. But, their father had only love in his heart. While his prodigal son was still far off, the father saw him and was filled with compassion. As quick as he could, he ran and put his arms around his son and kissed him, welcoming him home with open arms.

This grace is the same love God has for all of us, and we know it is this kind of compassion and forgiveness which we are to show others. Yet, acting like the father is not easy. Showing compassion, forgiving others, is hard work, particularly when we have been hurt. In those instances, our tendency is to be more like the older brother. We hold on to our bitterness and resentment, finding them hard to let go.

During the course of this week, something will invariably happen at home or at work, and you will have the opportunity to act like either the father or the eldest son. You will have the chance show warmth and kindness, or be angry and hold a grudge. When that happens, remember:

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable...

See you in church,
Andrew