

A WEEKLY WORD

March 30th , 2025 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Lois Drover

READINGS: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

This week the readings are focused on forgiveness and reconciliation. The love of God knows no bounds and we are always recipients of that agape love the Father has for us.

The Gospel today focuses on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This is a story we have heard since childhood and every time I study it I see something new. Something popped out to me and that was the younger son who wanted out. He felt entitled, knew his older brother was going to be the main heir, but that he would receive an inheritance also, and like many today, couldn't wait for his father to die to get his due.

We read stories in the news all the time about family members demanding money of their parents or grandparents before it is theirs to have. If a person works hard all their life and has a few assets in their golden years, what makes others entitled to those assets? We live in a world that wants instant gratification.

God knows all this and watches our behaviour toward our family, especially our elders. In some cultures, elders are revered and respected. In our North American culture, there is none of that. God calls us to look after widows and orphans, parents and grandparents, and the weak and vulnerable.

The younger son in the parable was one such son. He didn't respect his father. He just wanted what was his and went off to live his life. I'm sure he had lots of friends who helped him spend that inheritance, but where were they when the money ran out? Gone. Down on his luck, and starving, he had only one place to go – home. So he set out and went on his way.

What he didn't know was that his father still loved him, watched the horizon for him every day. As soon as he caught sight of him, he ran to his beloved son and hugged him to him. He could see the sorrow on his face and was filled with compassion. He instantly forgave his son, even before he asked for it.

So it is with God. Our heavenly Father will forgive us anything if we come to him and humble ask. He will reconcile us to Himself and restore us as His own forever.

The elder son? I can understand him, but also pity him because he couldn't forgive the brother who abandoned his family and came back to a celebration of his return. His anger at being the one left behind made him bitter and angry. Let us not be like that, but reach out in forgiveness to our "brother" and show him the compassion the Father did.

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Luke 15.7