

The Father's Embrace

Part 2

“Truly Our Fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” (1 Jn. 3-4)

Introduction

It takes time for a hunger to develop in a person where nothing apart from the Lord Himself matters. In our last booklet we looked at the prodigal son as he gathered his inheritance unto himself. After experiencing his inheritance without the Father, the prodigal began to know a deep inward emptiness. After a while just the thought of His Father became so sweet and precious that he was ready to take the lowest seat just to be in His realm of nearness. In this sense his heart was saying, “To the loss of all my own personal stature I desire You as my gain. The portion I yearn for is You in Your realm of Essence and Life, not in Your realm of inherited blessings and giftings.”

Certainly, as the prodigal returned home from the far country he felt like a complete loss and failure to his father. He had squandered what had been given to him and all that was left was himself in this condition of lack and emptiness. This son may have believed that he was going backwards from his Father’s purposes when in reality he was being prepared, not academically, but deep within for the true gift of the Father. Sometimes we forget that it is our heart that needs preparation and not always our commitment to household duties or a greater comprehension of religious information.

And so, even these hard seasons of searching for true fulfillment in “all the wrong places” can work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose! It is our earnest expectation that in ALL things, even the times of inward poverty in the far country, Christ will ultimately be found magnified in His church as her very Life.

Intense Hunger Pangs!

“And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father” (Lk. 15:14-18).

When the prodigal first left his father’s house with his due portion he probably felt ambitious, excited, and blessed. Yet over time, as the outward slowly began to dissolve, he was faced with what he was on the inside. Uncomfortable hidden lack turned into gnawing emptiness. What once was easily covered over with outward gifts was now

made naked in the famine. This son came to experience intense inward starvation. The issue turned from his blessings to his survival. Before he was trying to make a life for himself by wasting his inheritance, and now all that mattered was staying alive. All of sudden nothing seemed important besides finding something that would give Life. As he found himself begging for pig food he realized that even those who served his father where given bread to spare, yet here he remained far, far away from him.

This son had come to more than just deep hunger and emptiness, he had come to an end of himself. He had come to a place of hopelessness. It probably felt like the end. Certainly no one enjoys being in this place, and few know what to do when they get there. Some get bitter and begin to hold resentment and disappointment towards the Lord. Others become so disillusioned with everything that a sense of confusion overwhelms them. They feel lost in the deepest sense. That which was meant to bring purpose and satisfaction has left them in the dirt with the pigs.

In this place of separation there is no inward bread and so famine eventually over-runs the land. The inward famine cannot overcome the outward famine and conditions become desperate. All things are lacking and fullness exists only where the Father is. There is no sufficiency anywhere. You have lost all hope in yourself, with or without the father's gifts. You begin to see that to live as you without something on the inside is to live in a hell of your own making. Outward things added to you no longer meet the need. This realization goes so deep that you begin to cry out for Another Life to fill you. It has gone beyond "forgive me, help me, accept me..." to "replace me, fill me, overcome me." You become hopeful that the Father has something greater for you than just outward blessings. You stop searching within yourself as source for answers and start crying out for the Father to feed you with living Bread. What feels like the darkest hour of your life may actually be the hour closest to the Dawn. It is in this state that the prodigal chooses to return to his father.

The Unexpected Feast!

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Lk. 15:20).

And so the prodigal allowed his heart to turn his feet. He yielded himself to follow his deepest hunger. He did not despise this inward desire, but with a yearning emptiness and weary body pressed himself towards the father's house. He pushed against his own fears and shame. He rejected any pride that tried to remain and pressed on to find true help. He was a dead man in need of life and he would not allow his own heart to deceive him into believing that he was really alright.

The prodigal was rehearsing his apologies as he walked the path home. He was hoping to repent enough to be given a small spot in the servant corners. For the first time in his life he KNEW that he was no longer worthy to be called a son. For the first time in his life he realized that his very nature was a shame to the father's name. He knew the portion he

deserved was to be cast out, and so his best hope was for the servant's quarters. He was preparing for punishment and was probably beginning to brace himself for the blow.

And then, way off in the distance running madly towards him was a man who resembled his father. Even though it looked like his father's body, he had never seen his father running like that! Perhaps his father was so angry with him that as soon as he saw him returning home he came running to beat and punish him. The prodigal, with head hanging down, may have prepared himself to receive what he deserved. Then, just the time he was expecting to be slapped with condemnation he felt the arms of the father embracing him! Instead of the bowls of wrath being poured out on his head, he found himself showered with love and acceptance. Rather than condemning words there was the Father's kisses. Instead of the curse of separation there were gracious words of union flowing forth from the father's mouth. Instead of poverty there was plenty. Instead of separation there was communion like he had never known before. WHAT was going on!!!

The Father's feast was about to break his famine! The father was beginning to replace his inward poverty with the richness of the Life of the Son that fills all longing souls.

As we are receiving such grace we might begin searching ourselves to find a reason why we can feel worthy to let the Father hug and kiss us with such exuberance and freedom! We might want to stiffen up and reject the flood of grace pouring out of the Father, but why despise the riches of God's gift? It's beyond our measure to earn and ability to fathom, but it is the only way that we can receive of His fullness! (*"And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" Jn. 1:16*). (*"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in His Beloved" Eph. 1:6*).

The Right Confession!

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Lk. 15:21).

Instead of receiving all this attention to himself the prodigal's heart began to pour forth what he knew to be true. Listen to some of his declarations... "I am no more." "I have sinned in your sight." "I am not worthy to be called your son." These statements sound similar to Paul's confession that it was "not I but Christ" that was living in him (Gal. 2:20). In like manner we might also declare, "By virtue of union I partake of the Son in His relationship with the Father, His authority, His mind, His nature, and yet with all clarity I see it is not I but Christ who is living in me and unto the Father.

God never planned to make us the center. To receive the gifts unto ourselves perverts their purpose. God's purpose was to bring us all into oneness with THE ONE Himself that we might be found in Christ not having our own righteousness. In this place of union into Christ, all things are ours because we are in Him Who is the true Heir. He becomes the center rather than His benefits. All things consist only by Him Who is the fullness of all things. When we discover Him Who fills all and in all, then we have found the true

riches of our inheritance. Until our hearts turn in His direction in this way, we will misappropriate that which was only meant to be partaken of through union.

“As Long As”

“Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal 4:1-7).

It takes a long time for many of us to deeply realize that we are not “the One” to Whom God hath appointed Heir of all things! (Heb. 1:2). What and how we seek to receive from the Lord will depend on the kind of relationship we have with Him. Although we are not “the One” we are in “the One”, for the scriptures declare that IN Him we have obtained an inheritance (Eph. 1:11). We must understand our relationship of oneness with and in Christ before we can approach the Father properly concerning our inheritance. Up to the point of this realization we will come unto Jesus for many things, (miracles, blessings, help, deliverance, etc..), but we will not yet have come to Him that we might have LIFE. When we realize that without Him as our life we are nothing, even though we have all things outwardly, it is then that the great feast can begin.

Because the prodigal was not “the One” he could not corrupt the inheritance, for the true Heir is incorruptible. The prodigal could only seek to usurp the true Heir by receiving the benefits unto himself. The father knew that he would have to wait for the prodigal’s heart to turn, for he could not put the ring on someone who would use the authority in his own name. In the reality of our heavenly Father, God cannot put shoes on someone who would walk out to preach a gospel that is centered on man rather than on His Son. The Father has to wait for “as long as” it takes for His people to put away their childish motivations that they might see Him face to face (I Cor. 13:11-12) and be changed into His image (II Cor. 3:18). When the time comes and we are ready to approach Him through the true Heir, then the Father can reveal the riches of the inheritance in us. Now, instead of outward blessings added to the prodigal, Christ through him would be the rich treasure that would bless all those he came in contact with. Once the Son was revealed in the prodigal, the father knew he could send him forth to the far country and he would not squander the inheritance, but rather he would preach HIM who fills all things! (*“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen;” Gal. 1:15-16*)

Our Father has to wait “as long as” it takes for His sons to grow empty, tired and hungry. Using the benefits of the inheritance separate from the Heir needs to work famine deep within all of us. From our depths we must cry out for a deeper relationship with the

Father than just outward blessings can bring. As deep turns to look deep into the Father's heart we will see past what God does and can give. In this heart condition we can begin to experientially know the love of Christ that passes knowledge. Beyond anything we have known before, we will discover what it means to be filled with the fullness that is God Himself. When the Father reveals the true riches of our inheritance, Christ in us will become the treasure that we have been crying out to inherit!

Let's Receive Our In-the-Heiritage!

*“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.
And they began to be merry” (Luke 15:24).*

The call is to be with the Father, the way is through the Feast. To feast we must consume The Son that has been prepared for us from the foundation of the world. This Son is the Lamb that was slain so that we might partake of Him and have Life. He was bruised that through Him we might find healing and relationship with the Father again. The eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood brings us into communion with the Father through a new and living Way (Heb. 10:20).

It is in the Feast that we find the Father's deepest pleasure. We discover the Father in ways that we never knew Him before as He begins to relate to us through the Son of His love. We can feast, dance, rejoice, and be alive unto the Father through Christ. You never knew the Father could act like this did you? We will never know the passion and desire that is in the Father until we approach Him by Christ. It is with deepest pleasure that He responds to His Son and those who are now the Body that bears His life.

One might think, “But I don't see another son in this story besides the older son and the younger prodigal son.” Just consider that perhaps this parable was really speaking about God the Father's heart and plan for His family. Consider that in the Father's bosom there was always, even from before time, another Son hidden that had not yet been fully revealed to his family. Perhaps this Son cannot be revealed to His family until their hearts began to turn towards God Himself and His desires. Perhaps the true knowing of this Eternal Son can only come forth during the time the Father chooses to reveal Him in those who are ready to function by another Life other than their own. Even though all God's children have truly been birthed into God's family through receiving the incorruptible Seed which is Christ, they all have not yet known the greatness of that Life they have received.

This Son of the Father's heart is greater than a gift and more than just another brother. The only way to truly know this Son is to be clothed by Him and filled with Him. In reality we must become swallowed up of Him in living union! This is the Son that is to fill all sons that they might gather together in Christ and relate to the Father through Him. In this sense the way into an intimate relationship with the Father that exceeds outward blessings and responsibilities is for this Son to be revealed in you!

In this view the prodigal represents one who is entering into the love relationship between the Father and the Son by embracing and partaking of his union into Christ. He is experiencing the relationship of unprecedented love that always was and always will be. No one can imitate this relationship for no one can capture the Father's heart like Jesus, His Son does. And if we view the prodigal as a believer in relationship with God the Father, then we see that the love the prodigal felt in the Father's embrace exceeded his own personal acceptance and was flowing out from the deep and eternal well of the Father's love for His Son in whom we are now accepted. The prodigal represents one who tasted of the eternal love between God and His Son. The prodigal was experiencing the inheritance for He had finally found His identity and relationship with the Father through the Heir. This day he lives unto the Father for this Day he entered in by Christ.

Misunderstanding the Father

The prodigal's relationship with his father before he came into the feast as well as when he was in the far country was probably pretty dry. During that time he could have began to accuse his father of being many things. And so it is with our heavenly Father. Until we know Him through Christ we have not yet really fully known Him in the truest sense, and may misunderstand His wonderful heart.

The distance, the silence and the emptiness were not signs of the father's rejection. The famine was not a curse but simply the product of not dwelling in the realm of fullness in Christ. Many times we pray for help ignorant that our prayers have already been exceedingly abundantly and beyond measure answered, but they cannot be accessed outside of Christ.

We may think the Father is aloof when all along his heart is holding back a deep and passionate longing to embrace us and impart into us the reality of our true inheritance of oneness in His Son. His impartation is not mental information concerning His Son but the true embrace of God the Father that sends forth the very Spirit of the Son into our hearts that causes us to respond back to Him by Christ Himself. This adoption requires the Spirit of His Son to be sent forth into our hearts. This adoption speaks of a new relationship with the Father that is now through the indwelling Son. (*And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" Gal. 4:6*).

We will remain in a far country in our relationship with the Father, outside His House, until we begin to embrace that we have been gathered into Christ and determine to know Him as our Life.

The Other Son outside the House

“And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him” (Lk. 15:28).

Although there was great joy for the son who received the true riches of his inheritance, there must also have been sorrow and great desire for the son(s) who had not yet embraced the father’s provision.

Consider our Father’s desire to communicate with deepest embrace what He has made us in His Son. In this parable the father said to the older son, *“Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine (Lk. 15:31).* What more could we add to what God the Father has already made us in Christ? The need made evident in this portion of the parable was simply for this son to enter into what was already true.

Perhaps the Father’s heart longs for us with thoughts similar to these, “I would have gathered you into my deepest embrace and revealed my Son in you, but you would not. I would have kissed you in this relationship and you would have known the fellowship of Life that is with the Father and with His Son. And even though all things are yours, for My Son has been made all things to you, yet you have not fully seen my provision. Please receive your true inheritance and allow yourself to be gathered into this great feast. I cry for you, and I must hold back what is in my heart concerning you because you have chosen to relate to me outside of my house rather than in the Son. I must seem insensitive, distant and boring to you because the only relationship you know from me is that which is found outside of the communion of love in my Son and those who are relating to me through Him, in Him, and by Him. Sure, they can not boast in their own personal merits, their entire boast is that they are found in my Son, not having their own life and separate righteousness. Please come in, gather in, and let me embrace you in the reality of Christ as your Life.”

Notice that, in the parable, the father went out and entreated his other son to come in. The scriptures declare that true fullness and fulfillment isn’t until we all come into this knowledge of God’s Son as one mature man. Therefore the goal is not merely our own personal maturity, but that all come to know the Son as the life that fills the Body. *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).*

In reality there is no difference if we feel like a prodigal or the older brother. God has gathered us all into Christ as one new man and is simply waiting for us to wake up and enter into the fullness of this corporate relationship of Life!

Conclusion

Our famine is broken by entering into the only relationship that never has and never will run dry. Through Him we will find true intimacy with the Father. May Christ Himself be unto us our only portion, and may He in all reality become unto us our land of plenty!

May we allow the Holy Spirit to breath into us the deep longings of the Fathers heart for His Son that we might ever be drawn more fully into this eternal fellowship.***

THE END

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

Colossians 1:12-13