
Jones Road church of Christ

An Open Letter to Those Who Have Left the Father's House

One of the best-known stories of Jesus is commonly referred to as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This parable, found in Luke 15, tells of a man leaving his father's house only to find that life away from his father wasn't anything like he had envisioned. Eventually he came to himself and made the long journey back to his father where he only hoped he could be made like one of the hired servants, knowing he was no longer worthy to be treated as a son. But the father, portraying for us the love of God the Father, welcomed his son with open arms and threw a big party for him. This parable, as part of Jesus' explanation for why He sometimes ate with sinners, was intended to help everyone better understand God's love for all and His willingness to forgive those who had previously spurned His love.

Today people may leave the Father's house, i.e. stop worshiping and serving the God of heaven, for many varied reasons. Some leave during the teen years when rebellion too often seems the norm. Others may leave because they find the ways of sin appealing and the "house rules" too restrictive. (Sometimes they are rejecting God's rules found in Scripture, but unfortunately some left because of rules not found in the Bible, but instead imposed by people.) Perhaps it was the influence of friends or even a spouse. Maybe it was the hypocrisy (real or perceived) of one's parents or other members of the church. Some have drifted away without ever making a conscious decision to leave.

There are probably other things we could list, but why you may have left the Father's house is not our primary focus today; instead, we are writing with the hope that we might persuade you to return to the One who loved you and gave His Only Begotten Son for you. Our heavenly Father was willing to forgive those who killed His Son, so you need not fear that you have been gone too long or done too much to be accepted back. He stands ready to "kill the fatted calf" and throw a party for you, so why don't you allow Him to welcome you home?

If you have read the Parable of the Prodigal Son all the way through to the end you are aware that another son was included in the story, one who did not welcome his brother home. Perhaps you have a fear of returning to the Lord because you are not sure about how you might be received and perhaps this fear is heightened because you feel you were mistreated in the past. While we understand that fear, we give you our assurance you won't get the "older brother" treatment here at Jones Road. Unlike that foolish and arrogant older son, we know that we cannot please our Father unless we love everyone, and we also realize the heavenly Father's inheritance doesn't decrease in size when more share in it. We would welcome you back and do all we can to help you find a place of comfort in God's house. If you are struggling with some temptation or sin, we will do all we can to help you. We want you to be in God's house again and will sincerely strive to welcome you and build you up in the faith.

Please return to the Lord. If you have questions or concerns about this, please call, write, or get in contact with us any way you can, but know that we sincerely want to help.

With loving concern,

The Christians who make up the Jones Road church of Christ

