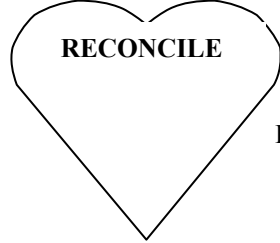


March 21, 2004
Fourth Sunday of Lent



Joshua 5:9-12
 Psalm 34
 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32



“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So to them Jesus addressed this parable: “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.’”

Reflection

Who do you need to reconcile within your family this week? Write that person a letter asking for forgiveness.

Dear . . .

Will you forgive me?

_____ *Name*



Activity



Have each member try this activity. Think about the persons in your family. Put their name next to the action that they find hardest to deal with (that tests them or that they get ‘testy’ about).

- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| _____ | chores |
| _____ | people who come late |
| _____ | a slow driver in a fast lane |
| _____ | toothpaste tube mashed in the middle |
| _____ | being lied to |
| _____ | a surprise quiz in class |
| _____ | burning dinner |
| _____ | being stood up for a date |
| _____ | waiting in a line |
| _____ | other . . . |

*May We Be a **Lente** Blessing*

*I was hungry,
And you gave me food.*

*I was thirsty,
And you gave me drink.*

*I was a stranger,
And you welcomed me.*

*I was naked,
And you clothed me.*

*I was sick,
And you comforted me*

*I was in jail
And you came to visit me.*

May our Lenten actions build a generous heart that moves us toward our brothers and sisters who are in need. We graciously accept your blessings this day: food, shelter, the gifts of each other. May we be Lenten blessings and grace for others.

Fold this paper in thirds so it can sit on your table as a prayer card. Then the prayer can be easily read from many different directions. Inside this table-tent you will find a variety of family ideas and activities that you and your family can do together.

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