

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

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Date: 17 August 2025

Preacher: Fr. Randall Russell

- [0 : 0 0] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. We often hear this morning's Gospel reading referred to as the parable of the prodigal son.
- However, I sometimes think that a better name for it would have been the parable of two very different brothers. Because our Lord actually begins this parable by saying, And a certain man had two. He had two sons.
- And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. Now, admittedly, most of this parable really does focus on the younger son.
- But that does not mean that the older son should be forgotten. In fact, this entire parable ends not with the younger son or the prodigal son being found, but with the older son.
- But with the older son refusing to rejoice in the fact that his younger brother had repented and finally returned home. For this older son tells his father, Lo, these many years I have been serving you.
- [1 : 2 4] I never transgressed your commandment at any time. And yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends.
- But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.
- Now, did you happen to catch what the older son just called his younger brother? Again, he tells his father, But as soon as this son of yours came, you killed the fatted calf for him.
- For not only is this older son jealous, But he is so jealous, He is so jealous that he cannot even bring himself to call his father's son his own brother.
- And who does this remind you of? Who do you think this older son in the parable is supposed to represent?
- [2 : 3 3] Well, is he not supposed to represent the Pharisees and scribes? The very ones who our Lord is directly telling this parable to?
- For Luke chapter 15 begins with, Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Jesus to hear him. But the Pharisees and scribes grumbled and complained, Saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.
- So Jesus spoke the following parables to them, Saying, And that's when we get the parable of the lost sheep, Followed by the parable of the lost coin, And then ending with the parable of the prodigal son.
- And in each one of these parables, Something or someone is lost, Then found, At which point there is much rejoicing, Except that The parable of the prodigal son does not end that way.
- In fact, The parable of the prodigal son is the only one, The only one of these three parables, That does not end that way.
- [3 : 4 9] For again, The parable of the prodigal son ends, With the older son grumbling and complaining, About how the younger son is receiving all this positive attention.

Which is not unlike, How the Pharisees and scribes all grumbled and complained, When Jesus was spending all his time, With a bunch of tax collectors and sinners, Rather than with them.

Because like the older son in this morning's parable, The Pharisees and scribes also believed, That they had served their father, Their heavenly father, Far more faithfully, And far more longer than anyone else.

And so just like the older son in this morning's parable, They too refused to acknowledge, That the tax collectors and sinners, Were their own brothers, Because they refused to sit at the same table with them.

For in life, In life, There are two kinds of people. Just like how in the parable of the prodigal son, There are only two sons.

[5 : 06] For on the one hand, There are the tax collectors and sinners, Who are dining and talking with Jesus, Who are not unlike the prodigal son, In this morning's gospel.

While on the other hand, There are the Pharisees and scribes, Who are always grumbling and complaining, And pointing out the faults of others, Who are not unlike this older son.

And truth be told, Neither one of these two groups of people, Are really all that great. For both have sinned and fallen short the glory of God.

In fact, The only difference between the two, Is that the tax collectors and sinners know it, While the Pharisees and scribes do not. For one of them is humble and repents, While the other is prideful and does not.

Therefore repent, And do not be like the Pharisees and scribes. But remember, Remember that we all are in the same boat.

[6 : 21] For again, All men sin and fall short the glory of God. Which is why in our liturgy, We all say, We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, Trusting in our own righteousness, But in thy manifold and great mercies.

For we are not worthy so much As to gather up the crumbs under thy table. Because none of us Deserves to be here.

None of us Deserves to be called children of God. Or even servants of God. But like a loving father Who watches and waits For his prodigal son to return home.

So also is God watching and waiting For his own children. Regardless of their many sins. To repent And to return to him.

For it does not matter What you have done Or left undone. It doesn't matter What past sins you have committed. Or even if you told your father That you wished he was dead.

[7 : 37] So you could spend your inheritance His money On a bunch of harlots. It doesn't matter. Because all ye Who do truly And earnestly Repent you of your sins.

And are in love and charity With your neighbors. And intend to lead a new life. Following the commandments of God. And walking from heads forth In his holy ways. Draw near with faith.

And take this holy sacrament To your comfort. For Jesus Christ is The fatted calf In this parable. Who was slain In order to welcome All God's children home.

So feast upon Christ This day And rejoice. And do not be ashamed To feast alongside Tax collectors And sinners.

For God's property Is always Always To show mercy. Nevertheless Those who are shown mercy Should likewise Should likewise Become merciful For we have A merciful And loving father And sadly When the older son In this morning's gospel Refuses to rejoice In the return Of his repentant brother He consequently Refuses to join In the feast Of his own salvation Electing rather To embrace A hell Of his own choosing An eternity Of resentment Bitterness And anger May God save us all From such a tragic And sad end For mercy Shall only be shown To those Who truly repent

[9 : 31] And who do not Think themselves Greater Than their brother For if one Cannot stomach To feast Alongside Such repentant Tax collectors And forgiven sinners On this side Of glory What makes them Think that they Would ever Rejoice to do so For the rest Of eternity For the kingdom Of heaven Is the eternal Home Of repentant And forgiven Sinners Such as this It is The eternal Home Of all Repentant And prodigal Sons For God Is merciful Thanks be to him In the name Of the Father And of the Son And of the Holy Ghost Amen Thank you.