

Trinity IX

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[0 : 00] Our gospel text this morning is the story of the prodigal son who demands his inheritance, leaves for a foreign land to squander his money after pretty much telling his father that he was as good as dead to him.

He then lands in a pen full of pigs eating slop with these unclean creatures. The one sin that I believe is highlighted throughout all these major transgressions here in our gospel text is the sin of presumption.

Presumption. Presumption is another way of saying entitlement in our more modern context. The younger son thought he was entitled to receive the portion of his inheritance, although his father was still living.

He presumed on his father's generosity and love, and he ended up in a pen full of pig slop. But there's another sin of presumption in this story, and that is of the older brother.

The older brother was angry with his father for letting his broken and humbled sibling come back home. And the father did not merely welcome his younger son.

[1 : 31] Our text says he ran to him. He kissed him. He put a ring on his finger, a robe on his back, sandals on his feet, and then he called for a great feast.

The older brother is outraged. He is ticked off at his father for his compassion.

The older son believed that his younger brother should pay for his transgressions, and that he should now be considered the favored child.

He believed his entitled position was being undermined by the gracious disposition of the father. There's a consensus on the meaning of this parable.

The early church fathers believed that the younger son represents the way of the Gentiles. The younger son went off to a foreign land.

[2 : 34] He then kept company with the unclean represented by the pigs. The Gentiles were seen as bombastic barbarians to the Israelites because the Gentiles lived as though there was no God.

They lived only for themselves. Therefore, the early church fathers saw the older brother representing the scribes and the Pharisees who turned up their noses in disgust to all those who were considered unclean, that is, Gentiles.

This interpretation is absolutely correct. The younger son left the house of his father in order to party. To live a life of freedom without any restraint, without any rules.

He was an entitled brat. The younger son was selfish, only looking out for his own interests, caring little about anyone else but himself.

His fun, he thought, was more important than any duty or responsibility even to his father. And this left him as a slave to his lusts and to his passions, which landed him in extreme filth.

[4 : 04] It left him destitute. The younger son wanted heaven on earth, but he ended up in a lonely hell.

The older son believed that only responsible and righteous people like himself deserved allegiance from his father.

He believed that he should be the sole heir of his father's goods and his affection. He should be the favored child and entitled to receive the perpetual praise from his father, who should have been thrilled to have such a wonderful son.

Entitlement, therefore, is nothing more than human pride manifested in the most selfish ways. Now, at this point, you might be saying, okay, father, got it.

Understand it. This is a story about those leaders in Israel who were jealous about the inclusion or the ingrafting of the Gentiles into God's covenantal love.

[5 : 10] This is a nice story that provides some real context of why St. Paul became so irate with St. Peter for refusing to eat with the Gentiles recorded for us in the second chapter of the book of Galatians.

So, father, the moral of the sermon is be nice and welcome all people. Got it. Say amen. Right? Not so fast.

Did you hear our epistle text of 1 Corinthians chapter 10 this morning? St. Paul is talking to the church in Corinth, Gentiles. But he uses language.

He uses the language of the Exodus to describe who these Gentiles are now. They are people who now share in the inheritance in Israel.

They have been grafted into the covenant by way of their participation in the new covenant, Jesus the Christ. They are people delivered from their bondage of sin as they pass through the sea of destruction, prefiguring their holy baptism.

[6 : 25] They are people who have been buried with Christ and now raised with him to new life. Therefore, they were to learn from their fathers who had been led by Moses through the Red Sea.

They were to learn from the people who had drunk from the rock that miraculously provided water for them on their journey through the wilderness.

And this primitive history that St. Paul records is now their family history. They are a part of the family. And although they were Gentiles by birth, these Corinthians living in the red light district of Greece, which Corinth was, these people were made sons of God through the life, the death, the resurrection, and the greater exodus, the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But St. Paul has another lesson he wants them, that is the Corinthians and all of us to learn. Listen as I read verses 6 through 11 of 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Now these things became our examples. Our examples. To the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

[7 : 52] And do not become idolaters as some of them. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did.

And in one day, 23,000 fell. Nor let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents. Nor complain as some of them also complained and were destroyed by the destroyer.

Now all these things happened to them as examples. And they were written for our admonition. Our admonition.

Upon whom the ends of the ages have come. What St. Paul is saying is do not commit the sin of presumption.

Do not live a life of entitlement. Believing that God will just turn a blind eye to our iniquity. Don't follow the world expecting full liberation.

[8 : 58] From any accountability without serious consequences. And dear people of God. Don't go chasing after the selfish ambitions and lies of this world.

Caring little about what God thinks. But just merely putting on a front. Such a life and life choices end badly.

Very badly. St. Paul goes on to say here in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 12. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

In other words. In other words. Don't. Presume on God's grace. Instead. Come back to your heavenly father's embrace.

Which is found in the outstretched arms of Jesus. Come back to the family. Leave the pigs. Leave the life of idolatry and complete narcissism.

[10 : 09] Being consumed with only your selfish desires. Leave the life of sexual immorality. Leave the life of pornography. And the hedonistic dogma of our culture.

That says your body is yours. It only belongs to you. So therefore obey its lusts. Your body belongs to God.

And one day we will all realize this. When our body will not listen to our brains anymore. Or when our brains do not function like they once did.

Then we will be utterly dependent upon the mercy and care of others. This is when we will certainly know that we are not the masters of our own fate.

Friends, God made us heirs of eternal life. Because we have been baptized into Christ Jesus. Our home is in the family.

[11 : 16] It is in the church. Being deeply rooted in the word of God. But our God does not force us to stay home.

The Father desires to embrace you and have full communion with you through Christ. But you have to come to him in faith, humility, and love.

The biggest problem with our culture. The biggest problem with all of us. Is that we often confuse our lust for true love.

And we flee from our home. The Holy Spirit brings all who truly repent. He brings us to the table together.

Where we leave the pig pen. And the world's cesspool. And where we feed on the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ. For eternal life.

[12 : 21] Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. Amen.