

### A Prodigal Son Returns (Henri Nouwen)

A few years ago, I myself, was very concretely faced with the choice: to return or not to return. A friendship that at first seemed promising and life-giving gradually pulled me farther and farther away from home until I finally found myself completely obsessed by it. In a spiritual sense, I found myself squandering all I had been given by my Father to keep my friendship alive. I couldn't pray any longer. I had lost interest in my work and found it increasingly hard to pay attention to other people's concerns. As much as I realized how self-destructive my thoughts and actions were, I kept being drawn by my love-hungry heart to deceptive ways of gaining a sense of self-worth.

Then, when the friendship broke down completely, I had to choose between destroying myself or trusting that the loss I was looking for did, in fact, exist...back home! A voice, weak as it seemed, whispered that no human being would ever be able to give me the love I craved, that no friendship, no intimate relationship, no community would ever be able to satisfy the deepest needs of my wayward heart. That soft but persistent voice spoke to me about my vocation, my early commitments, the many gifts I had received in my Father's house. That voice called me "son".

The anguish of abandonment was so biting that it was hard, almost impossible, to believe that voice. But friends, seeing my despair, kept urging me to step over my anguish and to trust there was Someone waiting for me back home. In my solitude I started to walk home slowly and hesitantly, hearing ever more clearly the voice that says, "You are my beloved, on you my favor rests."

This painful, yet hopeful, experience brought me to the core of the spiritual struggle for the right choice. God says, "I am offering you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you may live in the love of your Lord, obeying His voice, holding fast to Him." Indeed it is a question of life or death.

Do we accept the rejection of the world that imprisons us (*have the world send us among the pigs when they cannot use us any longer*), or do we claim the freedom of the children of God? We must choose! When we say, "I am useless, I am worthless, I am unlovable," we reject God making us children. As new creatures in Christ we know we are created "good".

### His Ways

God has a thousand ways  
Where I can see not one;  
When all my means have reached their end  
Then His have just begun.

Esther Guyot



## LINDEN LODGE WORSHIP SERVICE

March 6, 2011

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

*Lent is intended to resurrect our joy. Lent originally meant "springtime": the word comes from the Old English word for "spring," lencten, "to make longer"—reminding us that the slow, wonderful lengthening of this season in our souls can signal an end to a winter of bitterness and the flowering of Christ's love in us.*

March 6, 2011

**Thought for the Week:** Choose you this day  
whom you will serve - Joshua

**Key Verse:** "Then he came to his senses..."  
Luke 15: 17

**Opening and Prayer:**

**Songs:**

Trusting Jesus 422  
Amazing Grace 295

**Scripture Reading:**

Psalms 51:1-12  
Luke 15:11-21

**Special Music** Hardy Friesen  
Fill my Cup, Lord

**Message :** Nic Wiens  
Returning Home (Part 1)

**Closing Hymn:**

Satisfied 326

**Benediction:** Hardy Friesen

**Postlude:** Jean Thiessen



*The Mother of the Prodigal Son*

This poem is dedicated to all the mothers who have  
wayward children. Don't lose your faith in God who can  
bring them back to the fold.

Where is the mother of the prodigal son  
On that day so long ago?  
What were her thoughts  
And what were her fears  
As she watched him turn to go?

How many times in the dark of night  
Did the tears slide down her face?  
Did she get out of bed  
And fall on her knees,  
Just to pray that her boy was safe?

How were the days when she did not know  
Was he alive? Was he warm? Was he well?  
Who were his friends?  
And where did he sleep?  
Was there anyone there she could tell?

But, oh, on that day  
When she looked down the road  
As she had looked since her son went away,  
Did love unspeakable flood her soul?  
Did she cry?  
What did she say?

I think when the father had welcomed their son  
And the boy had greeted his brother,  
That the servants made a path  
For him to enter the door  
And the waiting arms of his mother.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray,  
and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

Ps 55:17