

Sermon for Lent 4C At Calvary Rockhampton and Living Waters Yeppoon

31st^h March 2019

The tangled web of life.

Today we have been reading from Luke 15:11-32

We see in the parable of the prodigal son that he went off to seek his fortune. How did that work out for him? Not so good apparently!

Some years ago, as a child, I recall being told of an uncle, my mothers' brother, who had moved from home, never to be seen again.

Has that happened in your family ever? Maybe you might think of that someone as being the 'black sheep' of the family. Perhaps nobody speaks of that person? They may have burnt a few bridges as in the case of my relative, and of course the fact that they are no longer around is something of a telling tale in its own right isn't it?

This parable of the lost son and his return that Jesus speaks of, reminds me of an uncle, my mother's brother, who 80 years or so ago left, never to be seen again. One aunt of mine managed to stay in touch occasionally over the years I am told, but even that only serves to highlight the brokenness of a family fractured by disagreement. In this case, you might say it was an inheritance issue.

Well, certainly in so far as this brother used the family chequebook to fulfil his own needs. And as is often the case, forgiveness is hard for some. You probably know someone yourselves who is a tough cookie, get on their wrong side and its not easy to get back in their good graces!

Our readings today are bringing to us the good news that our God does not dump us even when we have been sinful. Like the prodigal son, we or others go off and do our own thing sometimes, going against God even. In so doing, we take up a heavier yoke on our shoulders, way heavier than that light weight one that God places upon ours.

If we vacate our place in Gods family, don't expect things to be easy. That son in the parable told by Jesus, experienced a downturn in his standard of living.

The pigs were doing better than him. Why would we leave the comfort and support of those who love us? Why would we leave our God?

The love of our families, the love of Christ, our prince of peace, our King, is there for us. Why deny it? Surely that great love and support which our God gives us is more important to us than going our own, sinful ways.

Is there still room for our prodigal brothers, sisters, sons and daughter to come home? Of course, there is! Gods house has no limits. Jesus said that he went to prepare a house with many rooms for us! There is space aplenty for us as well as those who have left our house for whatever bauble they saw in the distance and wanted.

We, those faithful who have not left our home have a purpose in being a beacon to those who are lost, who have been away from home, perhaps on a journey, maybe even a difficult journey! Shine your faith, your light, so that they can find their way home again. Be their rock with Christs help, their anchor in the storm of life.

And just as the father of the prodigal son welcomed the son home, just as God does, so should we welcome those brothers and sisters in Christ back into our fold, into our church, our home. Not with questions or anger, but with love and support.

Just as our father in heaven welcomes each of us, indeed rejoices when we are back home, so should each of us. God is faithful, God is there for us always, God forgives us, leads us and blesses us always! Even in our darkest times. The rooms are ready, there is no space problem in Gods church! Who do we know that is lost, can't find their way home?

Bring them home! Bring them back into Gods Kingdom, not for a visit, but to stay.

Dear heavenly Father strengthen us by your Holy Spirit so that we may strengthen the bonds of family, your family. We ask that you guide us and make us one, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This is how we can say: the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.