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Should we be so shocked by the Father's overjoyed reception of his son considering that is the way God views us – not as despicable heathens but lost sons? This level of celebration makes sense when you consider that the ultimate purpose for Jesus leaving Heaven to come to earth was that this restoration and millions more just like it occur throughout the earth on a regular basis.

Observations about the younger son: _____

Observations about the elder son: _____

Observations about the father: _____

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 MSG

10 Distress that drives us to God does that. It turns us around. It gets us back in the way of salvation. We never regret that kind of pain. But those who let distress drive them away from God are full of regrets, end up on a deathbed of regrets. 11 And now, isn't it wonderful all the ways in which this distress has goaded you closer to God? You're more alive, more concerned, more sensitive, more reverent, more human, more passionate, more responsible. Looked at from any angle, you've come out of this with purity of heart.

Text your thoughts to: ask@victorywc.org

PARABLES

The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32 NKJV

11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.

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13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

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14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

"He who begins by using the world as a servant, to minister to his pleasure, ends by reversing the relationship." - R.C. Trench

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16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. **17** But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, **19** and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

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"No sinner comes to God with a just and adequate view of his character, but always finds him more merciful than he had dared to hope." - Matthew Henry

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20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

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21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and

sandals on his feet. **23** And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; **24** for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

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25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **27** And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' **28** "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

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29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; 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. **30** But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

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31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. **32** It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"