

WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE: EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME

September 8, 2024

Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



Romans 15:7

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Luke 15:11-32

11 Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. 12The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. 13A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17But when he

came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' " 20So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." 22 But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

25 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." 28Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never

South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

4343 Harrodsburg Road, Lexington KY 40513

859-223-1433 southelkhorncc.org

disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" 31 Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

job with his children? Why or why not?

7. The story doesn't offer an ending. Jesus invites us to take the next step. What do you think the older brother does next, and why?
8. What kind of Christ-like extravagant welcome is needed in our world today? For whom?

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Are there any moments of "extravagant welcome" in this story? What did you notice?
3. Has anyone ever gone out of their way to welcome you, make you feel comfortable/safe or included? What happened, and what difference did it make to you?
4. Who do you identify with in the story of the father and his two sons? Why?
5. Why do you think Jesus told this story? What might it reveal about who God is or how we are supposed to live out our faith?
6. What do you make of the father in this story? Does he do a good

Listen Online

Sermon audio available at southelkhorncc.org/sermons