

Read the Passage to Contemplate: Luke 15:11-24.

Let's apply these words from Jesus' parable to our lives today.

Scene 1. Our Happy Home.

A landowner has two sons. It was a prosperous estate and the Father considers everything he has as belonging to his sons, whom he loves dearly and doesn't withhold anything from them (Verse 31, further in the passage).

We too have a rich Father (**Ephesians 2:6**. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus) who gives to us from his limitless bounty (**John 14:14** You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it). Life is so good when we walk close to God and trust Him for all we need.

Song: This Is My Father's World - Buddy Greene

Scene 2: Season of Discontent

The younger son gives in to a spirit of ingratitude and looks around to see what he doesn't have. He knows a way that he and his friends can really live it up. With his inheritance! Because after all, it is HIS. He takes advantage of his father's love and demands the money prematurely. And it doesn't disappoint... for a while, anyway.

We don't have to look far or live very long before we ourselves notice there are nice things/fun things that are beyond our reach. And so we begin to devise our own plans. We stop following God and fall in with the Enemy's schemes. We're finally satisfied... until we aren't.

Reflection: *Let's take a minute to search our hearts. Father God, show me any area where I'm living in disobedience to you. If I've been walking away from you for awhile and it's not fun anymore, if I've taken the first few steps and it still brings me pleasure or even if it's something I'm not conscious of. Bring it to my remembrance Father, so nothing puts distance between us.*

Scene 3: Inevitable Consequences

Eventually the money runs out and the friends disappear. He has no way to survive other than to take a job caring for pigs, animals that are among the unclean according to his customs and forbidden to touch... and his stomach is still empty. Knowing he's hit that painfully hard, rock bottom, he remembers the "good old days", the happy home life he had come to disdain.

We can't deny that whatever it was that lured us away from walking with God brought us a measure of satisfaction. We may even have been able to convince ourselves that we had God's blessing. But one step away leads to another and another. The farther we get from God, the more determined we are to hide from Him. But the fun factor is long gone. An ache sets in. A longing for our happier times when we walked with God and shared our life with Him, problems and all.

Reflection: *Let's again take a minute to search our hearts. Father, is there anything in my life that I'm hiding, that I'm keeping from you because I'm too ashamed to put into words, or I consider too small an offence or I think it's too far in the past? Am I taking advantage of the blood of Jesus, presuming it's done it's job and I'm always clean before you? Please help me to deal with my sin in a way that honours your Son who paid the price with his life to have them all forgiven.*

Song: Softly and Tenderly - Alan Jackson

Scene 4: The Decision

The son's poor life choices led him to becoming a servant to a pig farmer and still not getting enough to eat. His own father's servants were treated well and didn't go hungry. What to do? He knew he was his father's 'spare'. He had an older brother, probably making him feel unneeded. It would make no difference to the family if he never returned. He had nothing to lose by throwing himself at the mercy of his father! He was prepared to live as a servant, apart from his father's house and presence, and just be content to be alive. So remembering his father's generosity and love, he decides to take a chance and sets off for home.

When we're walking on our own with a load of guilt and shame for whatever we left our relationship with God for, there will always be an awareness that the road ahead won't bring satisfaction like the one we shared with our heavenly Father. It was our foretaste of heaven and has no substitutes down here on earth. The sons of Korah knew this as well, when they penned the words to **Psalm 84:10** " Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

We hear the voice of the Enemy who doesn't want to let us go, saying "*How can God ever forgive you. You knew what you were doing when you turned your back on him. The door is shut. You don't get a second (Third? Fourth? Fifth?...) chance. He doesn't need you. No one else would've done that. Shame on you. He won't let you into his presence with what you've been doing/ saying. You may as well stay here and make the most of it now*". But having tasted God's goodness, we turn back to Him. If we had to, we would settle for a lifetime of penance if only to receive a small measure of God's grace once more!

Reflection: *Let's take a moment to think of what it takes for us to bring our sins to God. Does our pride keep us in denial for as long as possible? Does shame keep us from putting it into words? Are we afraid of God's wrath? Do we use things to occupy or numb our thoughts so we don't think about it?*

Scene 5: Where It All Ends

The father saw the son before the son saw the father. The father ran to meet his child. He had been standing on that hill day and night, watching for his boy to return home. He couldn't wait for him to be in his arms. He stopped the son right after the first apology. Nothing more needed to be heard. The father wrapped his son in a clean robe, puts sandals on his feet and a ring on his finger. The Father accepts nothing short of restoring his son to the prominent position he held before leaving home.

Hallelujah, we have the same Father! Our Father waits and watches for us the whole time we are far from Him. He forgives us the very first time we ask. He doesn't want ANYTHING more from us. And He will never bring up our rebellion again. It is completely forgotten. He washes us clean and

gives us royal robes to wear. He bestows his riches upon us. He wants everyone who sees us to know Who we belong to!

Friends, lets remember a few of His promises of everlasting love for us:

Romans 8:1 assures us “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”.

1 Peter 2:6 and Isaiah 28:16 says, “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Psalm 103:11-12 assures us that “as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us”.

With gratitude we trust **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

As we sing this song in closing our time together, may we offer it up as a prayer of confession, repentance, forgiveness, gratitude and praise.

Closing Song: Running Back To You - Seph Schlueter.

This Is My Father's World

This is my Father's world
and to my listening ears,
all nature sings and 'round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world,
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand, the wonders wrought.
This is my Father's world,
the birds, their carols raise,
the morning light, the lily white
declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.
This is my Father's world,
oh let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world,
the battle is not done.
Jesus, who died, shall be satisfied
and earth and heaven be one
Source: [LyricFind](#)

This Is My Father's World lyrics © Neil A Kjos Music Company

Softly and Tenderly

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Calling for you and for me
See on the portals, He's waiting and watching

Watching for you and for me
Come home, come home
Ye who are weary, come home
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling, "Oh, sinner, come home"
Oh, for the wonderful love He has promised
Promised for you and for me
Though we have sinned He has mercy and pardon
Pardon for you and for me
Come home, come home
Ye who are weary, come home
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling, "Oh, sinner, come home"
Come home, come home (come home)
Ye who are weary, come home
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling, "Oh, sinner, come home"

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: Bob Miller / Will L. Thompson

Softly and Tenderly lyrics © Universal Music Corp., New Spring Publishing Inc.,
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Running Back to You

I was an orphan defined by mistakes
Thought I was forsaken that You gave up the chase
I went to the reaches to try and ease the ache
Turned my back on the One who kept calling my name
You kept calling my name
Didn't matter where I was at
You just kept calling me back
Back to the table
Back to my home
Back to my Father who never lost hope
For the first time in ages
I know what to do
With my arms wide open, I'm running to back to You

Lenten Devotion March 4, 2026

I'm running to back to You
Now I have been rescued, my soul is remade
But even the ransomed can fall on their face
When I'm drowning in questions
When I've lost the path
Your love is the answer
'Cause You're calling me back
Back to the table
Back to my home
Back to my Father who never lets go
Whatever I'm facing
I know what to do
With my arms wide open, I'm running to back to you
I'm running to back to You
It doesn't matter all the times where I've been in over my head
I'm never too far gone where Your arms cannot pull me back again
I've never been so lost where Your love could not fill my emptiness
I'm never too far gone where Your arms cannot pull me back again
Back to the table
Back to my home
Back to my Father who never lets go
Whatever I'm facing
I know what to do
With my arms wide open I'm running to back to you
Back to the table
Back to my home
Back to my Father who never lost hope
For the first time in ages
I know what to do
With my arms wide open, I'm running to back to you
I'm running to back to You
I'm running to back to You
Oh
I'm running back to You
I'm running to back to You

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Jacob Sooter / Seph Schlueter

Running Back to You lyrics © Essential Music Publishing