

What Easter Means to "Me!"

By Cere Muscarella

Luke 15.11ff "A certain man had two sons. The younger said, 'Father, give me the portion of your goods that falls to me.' So he distributed his estate to them. Not many days later, the young son gathered his portion and journeyed to a far country, and there wasted everything he had with 'riotous' living. But when he had spent it all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he couldn't take care of himself. So he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the refuse that the swine ate, but no one gave him anything. When he came to himself, he said, 'My father's hired servants have bread enough to spare and I'm dying with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I'll say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." 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. 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.' 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. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for my son was counted as dead and is alive again; I thought he was lost but here he is, found.' And they began to be merry.

This is a story of limitless love and the resulting mercy and restoration! It is the spirit and the story of Easter!

Our Easter Parallel... *The first part of the story tells of the young sons desire to rule his own life!* The very nature of self-rule demands that we leave our Father behind... He took what was given to him... And took it all to a far country! We know how that worked(s) out... "Prodigal" means "wasted/dissipated" Self-rule is a waste of time and resources! Working for/willing to eat 'scraps.'

Wouldn't it have been great if there was a sign on the road to say: "STOP!"

The middle of the story speaks to us of the needed realization/return to sanity! He was in a foreign land, broke, in a natural calamity, joined to strangers, feeding pigs, slaving for scraps... Sometimes bad circumstances are the only things that can get us to "consider!" There "he came to himself!" realization) The suggestion is that a madness lifted, and he found himself again... "He turned toward home!" (repentance)

Wouldn't it have been great if there was a sign on the road to say: "YIELD!"

Every aspect of the story exists to frame the Father's great love! Before he even got home to confess... His father saw him and ran to meet him! A hug, a kiss, before he could speak signaled acceptance... The robe, ring, shoes and party foretold his restoration! The exclamation: "Is alive again, lost but now found," genuine joy of the Father!

Wouldn't it have been great to see a sign along the way, "Welcome@Home!"

The Cross stands as the sign of God's incredible love and restoration! And the Cross stands as the roadside sign: Stop, Yield, Go Back!

What Easter means to "Me..." *As a long time Believer...* the Cross is a reminder that there are people around me that I need to point toward the sign! "Do you know what this means?" ***As a believer...*** it is a sign to remind me that life cannot be wasted! Yield to the rule of your Father! ***As someone who has never believed before...*** it's the "mobile" sign to turn around to receive the kingdom of God! It is possible to turn around before hitting the wall if you will "stop the way you're going, look around and listen!"