

Excessive Spending

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses God's love for humanity and His desire for reconciliation, as revealed in the parable of the prodigal son. The investment that God makes in man is immense. His willingness to give an individual a chance even without having the guarantee that he has straightened up and not repeated his fall is immense, and this attitude is visible in the parable of the prodigal son. Although many people like to compare themselves to the prodigal son due to the happy ending of the parable, most of them actually have much more in common with the older brother and refuse to understand that every person, regardless of public attitude, is equally precious to God. However, it should be noted that the identification with the older brother is unfortunately real. The article emphasizes that although humans fall prey to a recalcitrant attitude, God is always willing to wait and make atonement for each individual. It reveals that His forbearance, as well as His grace, are far more than human understanding can comprehend.

KEYWORDS: waiting, sacrifice, prodigal son, older brother, trust, understanding, joy

The third parable in Luke chapter 15 presents a special point of view. The pericope is wide and the development is special. A father had two sons, one of whom, more rebellious, after investigating the possibilities of development in the parental home, asks the father, still alive, to give him his share of the fortune. He tries to find his future apart from the family matrix and goes out into the world. Without minimal economic knowledge but also with little life experience, our young man quickly ends up spending the wealth he received and, pragmatically, decides that, rather than starve to death, it is preferable to return to his native broken house.

He is also preparing a speech in this regard. Atonement forced by the sufferings he was going through, conjunctural emotional speech that camouflaged the food sufferings that shook his health and self-esteem! Complacency solution?! Pride wounded by the personal tragedies he experienced, and which set the course of his later life.

On the other hand, the emotionally wounded father, who knew very well his son's ability to "conquer" the world, decides to faithfully wait for his son. He was certain that the youngest son would not be able to hold out much longer and would return home, on the same road he had set out on with the hopes given by the illusion of independence he had won and leaving behind a parent who had looked at him and raised him with more warmth than he could understand. This constant expectation of the son's return gives the father the strength to follow the daily self-imposed ritual of watching the road where he suspected that one day, he would see his son return. And the miracle happens, and the passive father becomes proactive when he recognizes his child, runs towards him, falls "on his back", offers him the preserved coat and the appropriate ring. He had forgotten the son's offensive attitude towards the boy, his proud demeanor, the irony and humiliation of the village, the conduct of his own servants, who were probably more insolent because they knew the family secret which they regarded as an educational failure of the master. And about the local people, they understood the unsuccessful pedagogy of their rich citizen with democratic views, remembering that the long-awaited son had made an implicit wish when he was asked for his "share of the fortune". It was a codified "wish" through which the spendthrift son wished the end of the progressive father willing to experiment with new forms of capital transfer. The old man, however, unperturbed, had continued his life within the same rigors to which he had added one more, the daily search of the way home.

After the son's departure, the disconsolate father had lived in anticipation, longing for the traitorous son's embrace. He had been waiting for him for a long time, so the reunion triggered the parental outpouring that the oprelists do not seem to have. This emphasized the joy of the old man, the pillar of his godhood, and it was also the victory of his educational style. "Teach the child the way he should follow, and when he grows old, he will not deviate from it" (Proverbs 22:6). And he asks the servants, like a master reborn from his own failure, to sacrifice the "fatted calf" "let us eat and be merry" (Luke 15:23). It seems that the old father was ready to waste even though this spendthrift child had caused significant damage to the family by his departure. But after all, was the party given in honor of his son's return, but was it also the father's party celebrating his educational triumph? Teach the child the way he should follow...

As is known, the ancient Hebrew ceremonial system includes several types of sacrifices. Bringing a gift for a Jew was a moment of enjoyment, of party because it gave the horizon of a new life after the "burial" of the past and full of visible failures. They followed the unwritten rule but enunciated many later by Nehemiah, "This day is dedicated to the Lord your God; do not mourn and do not cry!" (Nehemiah 8:9).

To the common Jew this mixture of bitterness mingled with joy was second nature. At every sacrifice the Jew experienced this joy-sorrow dualism. At the wedding in Cana there is the trouble of the lack of wine and the joy of turning water into wine (John 2:3.10). When they had crossed the Sinai Peninsula, although they had suffered a lot, they were happy to reach Canaan. After fears, joy. The sacrificial lamb was impressive. The ritual required the man to stab his own domesticated animal, and this added an additional emotional connotation. According to this procedure, difficult to understand in the terms of today's modern man, a party followed and the Jew, upset that the animal he had raised had died, rejoiced for its eternal salvation. The Jews seemed to be made of this bittersweet human dough.

There is in the Jewish system of atonement a special type of sacrifice, the atonement for the unconscious and therefore unassumed sin. This cleansing was regulated according to the economic level of the one who requested the sacrifice, according to his social class. A person with a higher social weight in the case of this type of sacrifice brought a larger animal to the altar, if you were a commoner, a smaller animal. If you were a priest with a blessing, you sacrificed a ... calf (Leviticus 4:3) because priests were at that time the highest social class that ensured not only the religious ritual, but also the administrative functioning of the state, the school and the medical.

A chieftain was asked to sacrifice a goat (Leviticus 4:22.23) and a commoner, a heifer (Leviticus 4:27.28). There is also a peculiarity for this type of loot. It could also be offered for the "sin of the whole assembly" and the sacrificed animal on this occasion was a... calf (Leviticus 4:13.14). As in the case of the priest!

According to cultural arrangements our character, the old father, was the priest of the family. And he wisely decides to sacrifice ... the calf. The found son came from a high social class and his social position is not that of the common man, and that is why it is decided that the calf must be sacrificed. According to the rank and in accordance with the laws promulgated by Moses, the father has the attitude of Job: "And, after the feast days passed, Job called and sanctified his sons: he got up early in the morning and brought for each of them a burnt offering. For Job said: "Perhaps my sons have sinned and angered God in their hearts" (Job 1:5).

The choice of the calf does not seem random. In the case of unknown sins, a calf was sacrificed for the priest but also for the entire congregation. The priest's family, except for the married girl, could participate in the meal with holy dishes (Leviticus 22:12). Wasn't the sin of the whole congregation here as well because everyone in the house had participated in the wrong decisions made by the prodigal son? Hadn't everyone, servants, servants, or other people in the house been guilty of the son's wrong decisions? Did their advice, from different

moments of the young man's life in the parental home, misdirect him? They all had to atone! The wrong attitude must be assumed, and the father does it implicitly. The son's fault, the father thinks, is not only his but also the fault of the whole community, because we all did not know how to guide him properly.

The return of the son to the parental home did not give the senior of the house any guarantee that the boy could not start over. Our imagination makes us think that the boy stayed in the house, good, obedient! The happy ending is in the reader's head. However, Paul also accepts a pessimistic scenario: "For those who were once enlightened and who nevertheless fell... crucify again, for themselves, the Son of God" (Hebrews 6:4.6).

It is not a guarantee that once someone has "tasted the heavenly gift" he remains with the same "taste" for the rest of his life. And although the father probably knew this, he still receives it with great pomp! Without guaranteeing that the return of the son is an assurance, the old man does not seem to be concerned with this scenario. was lost and found" (Luke 15:23.24)

And the father orders the slaughter of the fatted calf. As a sacrifice for the sin committed by his son, sin committed unwillingly, out of ignorance, and now discovered. As a sacrifice for him, the family priest, as a sacrifice for the community he patronized. As usual the parable does not have a clear ending and leaves us to give free rein to our imagination.

The complaints of the grumbling brother are also worth noting. Much has been said about him, although his attitude rather suits the average Christian, who consumes his religious life in the darkness of the church. He is the usual case, confused by stupid rituals without the courage to assume an open rebellion. The exception is his brother, not him. He wants a lot but does not cross the line he draws in his own head. It's the revolt hidden under a broad smile that is always displayed, but only out of complacency. "I have served you as a slave for so many years, and I have never disobeyed your commandment; and you have never given me even a kid to make merry with my friends" (Luke 15:29)

The eldest son does not look up, does not touch the air; only the earth is his horizon and the position claimed and assumed is the humble one. "You didn't even give me a kid"... not even a kid. His claim was a goat, a common man's sacrifice for an unknown sin. The brother could not be seen from the high social class and runs away to make a destiny away from the one who had subjugated his childhood because he does not understand who his father is, but even the decent boy who did not have educational problems could not look up even though he had stayed permanently next to his father. He didn't understand who his father was either. The main impediment was his lack of perspective, his own opinion of himself. The two brothers were in different spiritual phases in relation to the father. And the most painful part follows: "and when this son of yours came, who ate your wealth with harlot women, you cut off his fatted calf" (Luke 15:30).

The eldest son is not part of the "team" of the house, he cannot be one with his rebellious brother and therefore cannot rejoice with someone who ate his father's fortune "with lewd women" He distributes justice and stands as the defender of the father's honor which is honorable even though in the background the unspoken accusation is heard: "You father sponsored these debaucheries, and indirectly paid for these promiscuous women; You are the MORAL AUTHOR. I can't be part of this family".

From the beginning, we can say that the reader/listener does not like the attitude of the good son who stayed at home to inherit. Paradoxically, he becomes the negative character through his speech and behavior, so we naturally identify with the prodigal son. However, an identification with the older brother is much more normal because we have a lot in common with him. We hide our thoughts under crafted words that apparently protect the Father's honor but deep down we strike Him. We defend his cause, "the father's wealth", but forgetting that the father's wealth is even the brother with whom we do not want to share anything, whom we want to see how he pays for the years of ease assumed by him and only suffered by us! We

forget the father's promised answer "all that is mine is yours" (Luke 15:31) and ignore the invitation to take up "My anger is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you did not speak so righteously of me as the servant spoke Mine" (Job 42,7).

In Luke chapter 15 there are three parables. People from various social classes, an investor, an old woman with low income, a rich man with two sons. They all have a common reaction: they throw a party when they solve a loss. A patch that exceeds the value of the loss. To immediately fall in love with a boy who stole half your fortune, for one who went out of his way to bankrupt his father, seems bizarre. And yet the father thinks so, illogically. And not only do they think like that, but they also act like that. The divine economy has other rules that defy material gain. God does not seem like a very successful investor, but rather a naive one. A father willing to waste love and, despite negative experiences, ready to start over, which also assumes a future loss but the moment of spreading love should not be missed. Although everything seems to be an economic failure, only he understands immateriality because it involves a lot of feeling, a lot of emotion.

The parable "breathes" love and immerses you in an uncontrolled dissipation of affection, thrown continuously and in any direction. It is an uncalculated waste of tenderness given "thoughtlessly", a strong soul attachment for something that does not deserve it but still seems immeasurable in the eyes of God (Rotaru 2016a, 34-44), a passion for His own good, a love without limits (Rotaru 2016b, 29-43), in fact, some immeasurable expenses, exaggerated even, to save someone. Paul's question is piercing "How shall we escape, if we are indifferent to such a great salvation/love?" (Hebrews 2:3). The parable of the prodigal son has a painful epilogue in the subtext: it is so easy to get to heaven when there is so much grace and so hard to miss it definitively with minimal opposition.

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