

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Psalm 51: 3-4, 12-13, 17, 19

1 Tim 1:12-17

Luke 15:1-32



In the first reading The Lord sends Moses back to the Israelites, who left alone for a period of time, became depraved by molding and worshipping a golden calf. Moses pleaded with the Lord to spare them from wrath and he reminds the Lord of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The psalmist seeks mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing from God. He pleads for renewal of spirit and promises to be contrite and humble of heart. He will continually praise God and pleads that the Holy Spirit be not taken from him.

In the second reading Paul thanks Jesus Christ, our Lord, who showed great patience with him. He was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and arrogant in his ignorance, and now is an example of how the Lord graces the repentant heart. Paul acknowledges the mercy of God and emphasizes that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

In the Gospel Jesus is criticized for associating with sinners. In response Jesus tells a number of parables regarding the joy when things lost are found. In the parable of the prodigal son how very happy the father is to receive the repentant son. There are no "I told you so" scolding's, just acceptance and great joy in finding a loved one who was lost.



**The Father welcomes us with open arms,
And the Son has shown us great patience.
The Holy Spirit transforms us into living temples.**

The prodigal son is identified as one who is "lost," a word that is used when something is not in the place it is expected to be. He left family and lived his own lifestyle; it is apparent that it was not suited to him and utterly destroyed his peace as there was no appropriate work for him and he did not find friends that would help him. He was degraded to feeding the hogs and sharing their fodder, and this was worse than eating with publicans and sinners. Remembering home and returning, he was greeted joyfully by his father. The essence of this story put the Scribes and Pharisees into a corner where they were forced to look at their own attitudes on forgiveness.

How many of us can say that our lives are not also examples of a prodigal son or daughter? Can you imagine how happy our heavenly family was when we returned to faith? The psalmist's prayer is also ours in the sense of receiving mercy, forgiveness of our past wrongs, the washing away of our guilt in a total cleansing. We are to seek clean hearts, steadfast spirits, and humility. If you are still feeling guilty of your past imagine Paul who planned out the persecution and killing of early Christians. Relax, praise God, and be grateful for the forgiveness we receive from the Father