

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

AND SHOES

By Jeff Sweeten

Seeing the figure far down the road, the recognition was instantaneous; the father knew his son. Hastening to embrace him, the father must have been greeted with the pungent odors of his son's former occupation and the shocking sight of a disheveled slave, the polar opposite picture of his son's cocky countenance at his departure. Still, the Father's joy is hard to quantify.

"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 this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Luke 15:22-24

The **degree** of forgiveness is the feature hard to fathom. Natural human arrogance minimizes repentance based upon the inevitable consequences but God's mercy transcends memory. Yes, we are all sinners (Romans 3:23), often the stolid reminder of the holier-than-thou crowd. And, unfortunately, the weight of poor choices is often enhanced by sanctimonious souls bereft of mercy. But, to the contrary, God shows us in this parable how forgiveness is supposed to work.

When the Prodigal Son "came to himself," the text leaves no doubt that he did not like what he saw. It is at this point that all sinners have a decision to make, summed up in the contrast between Judas and Peter. Shall we drown in bitterness and go out and hang ourself (Matthew 27:5) or go out and weep bitterly, preparing for renewal (Matthew 26:75)? With nothing in his hand and no pride left in his heart, the Prodigal Son went back to the father, expecting only an improved status as slave. Who could possibly have imagined the bounty of blessings he received.

The lyrics of an old "Negro spiritual" state: "All o' God's chillun gotta shoes," a cultural lesson straight from the Bible. Children in America's early days were often void of shoes, but slaves hardly ever owned shoes. Did you notice in the parable? A regal robe for a royal son? Certainly! A ring representing returned riches? Of course! But, shoes? Yes, down to the last detail, the son was again a son, no longer a slave.

God forgives like no one else. I invite you to seek Father's forgiveness; you'll be amazed. (Thanks, Ray).

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Class • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130