

Greetings from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Amen

Lent 4 March 14

Sermon Title: Terms for Forgiveness

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Let me read the first few verses of our Gospel, ***Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him (Jesus). And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*** ***So he told them this parable:*** The parable that Jesus tells them in our text is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Many of us have heard this parable before but let me recap this parable. We have a son that wants his share of his inheritance. The son leaves to a city away from his father and falls into reckless living. Reckless living is all types of lusts of the body, sins and he squandered his inheritance away. One could say that he squandered, or lost his eternal life because sin now rules his life once again. For the son was part of the family and heir to the inheritance of his father. He had eternal life for he was part of the family of God, a son, but now he is not. The sinful life drives the prodigal son to the pig pens of life, for the Jew that is the worst place to be, for us we would say that we were at the bottom of the barrel. God sometimes allows you to go

to bottom of the barrel, or allows you to hit the wall, crash and burn when we have not confessed a sin or we have allowed a sin to be “the number one thing in your life.” God does not cause the problem, it was the sin in your life that caused it but He allows sin to cause a problem in your life to get your attention, and finally God’s Law convicts you of your sin. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, he finally comes to his senses; he is convicted of his sins. Notice the Scripture uses ‘comes to His senses.’ Sin can be in your life or another’s that blinds them to the sin until God’s Word brings one to their senses. The prodigal son confesses them and goes back to his father’s place. The prodigal son does not think he is good enough to be part of the family or even to be part of the inheritance again. But he goes back seeking his father’s forgiveness. To face his father and have food is better than dying of hunger. To the surprise of the son the father goes running out to meet him. The father does this for two reasons, one to show his love for his son and secondly the father does not want his son to change his mind and turn away once again. The father wants his son to be alive once again not dead. The father gives him the robe and the ring to symbolize that the son is once again accepted into the family and to celebrate his return to life. The son was once dead but is now alive, ***For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ***

Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). Now the older son comes. The older son represents the Pharisees the ones who think that their righteousness is from doing good, good works. And they thought as like the older son thought, "I do not want to associate or rejoice that my brother is alive again because my younger brother is a sinner. I do not associate with sinners. I am too good for that." For us, long time believers and maybe new believers we may also think similar thoughts. You do not think that you are too good but how can God accept that type of person into His family. They are the worst of sinners. Or, maybe you think and say to yourself "I'm glad that I am not like that person look at what sin he or she has done! I do not want to associate with that person." When you think such things you have forgotten something that is important for you. You were a sinner that God has shown His grace and forgiven you; God has made you His child. Did you deserve that status? God has given all who believe in Jesus Christ the status of sons, who will inherit eternal life. Secondly, God desires all to come to knowledge of His Son, to believe and to be saved! Even His people who reject him in this story and all of Israel, that have gone astray, the ones who do not want to rejoice in other sinners being saved, the ones who stand outside His banquet and refuse to come in, the ones who refuse to accept God's plan that He saves sinners in Christ, He invites and

encourages them to repent and believe in Jesus and be saved! This is the only way how one is saved is by Christ's redemption won on the cross and faith in Him.

God invites all sinners to His heavenly banquet *by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone* and God rejoices when a sinner repents and believes in Christ. We thank the Lord that He forgives you when you confess your sins just like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son forgives his son rather than God being like the older son holding a grudge and not forgiving you. The Lord's forgiveness is total forgiveness. God forgives you when you confess your sins but not because of yourself, because of Christ. God bestows on you, gives you, the status not of a servant but of a son of God, child of God, part of the family, an heir to kingdom of God. Nothing is held back, total forgiveness and acceptance. God robes you in the robe of Christ's righteousness. Like the father in the parable places a ring on his son's finger to symbolize that he is once again part of the family, God has not given you a ring but has similarity has marked you with the sign of the Holy Cross on your forehead and on your heart as one redeemed by Christ, the crucified. You are marked as a child of God in Christ. God the Father does all this in Christ out of compassion

and love for you. Not just a small amount of love but an over-abundance of love. God sent His Son who knew no sin to become sin for your sake.

1John 3:1 – ***See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called ‘children of God’; and so we are.*** What kind of Love? -

lavished love, undeserved love, perfect love. Love in which the Father will run after you to bring you back into His family. Love to go out and eat and be with sinners. Love as like the shepherd that will go out to seek the one lost sheep. Love as like the woman who will not stop cleaning her house until she finds the coin that was lost. The kind of Love in which God the Father rejoices in the fact that one who was lost, dead in sin, is now found, and is alive in Christ. These are the terms of forgiveness that God the Father wants to give you, son-ship, and eternal life, to be with Him forever in Paradise because of Christ.

And may the peace of God, which is beyond all human comprehension, keep your hearts and minds through your faith in Christ Jesus. Amen