



Lost + Found Reflections—Week 2: Bottom



Growing up in my family you learned a lot of respect for *Alcoholics Anonymous*. There are actually case studies in “the Big book” that are based on members of my extended family. Maybe for this reason, I have always been interested in the notion of “hitting bottom.” **What is it that actually makes people give up what they thought was everything and start in a new direction?**

Reading through the story of the prodigal son this week, we come to his bottom point. He took his father’s inheritance and the freedom it could buy. He headed off to a new land, leaving all those who loved him, and could hold him accountable. Quickly, he realized that the inheritance that he had traded everything for scattered like dust in a windstorm. He was forced to get a job as a servant feeding pigs (an absolutely disgusting idea to Jesus’s Jewish audience). Here in this place, the Bible says “he came to himself.” I love that line. There **in the darkest of the dark he found out who he truly was and what actually mattered to him.**

The prodigal learned that for him more money had actually meant more problems, and he had to sacrifice his

very worldview to reconcile the truth he discovered. He had to come to realize that even life as a servant in his father’s house was better than what all his riches could buy him.

This is why giving isn’t just important, sacrificial giving is important. To say spiritually centered, you need to give to the point you feel it. You need actually to give up something. Whether it be a sacrifice of worldview like the prodigal son, or the sacrifice of time in a life dedicated to ministry, or the sacrifice of material comfort from those who show true generosity, it is sacrifice that shows us who we are and what really matters to us.

Put another way, if you want to know which way is up, you need to know where your bottom is. What is it that you need to give up to stay rested in your Father’s arms? Is it an idea? Is it a security blanket? Is it a damaging relationship? **What do you need to come to terms with before you can grow closer to God?**

Lost and Found: Special Focus Scripture

For this series we have a theme of the story of the prodigal Son from Luke 15:11-32. Today we're focusing especially on the bolded section below.

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them.

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' " So he set off and went to his father.

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound."

Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."



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The Rev. Les Carpenter
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church