

THIS IS YOUR SEARCH!

Luke 15:11-24

Int: This is an old story, yet it never grows old. Chafing under his father's authority, a young man took his inheritance and fled to a far country so he could live as he pleased. He burned through his cash in a hurry. ["Prodigal" means not "bad" but wasteful.] When a famine hit, he had no money and no friends. He took a job keeping pigs. One day he saw how foolish he was and decided to go home and ask his father for a better job. His father threw a party to celebrate his return and restored him as a son!

Why did he go to the far country? He was searching for some things everybody wants, things everybody searches for. He was looking for

FREEDOM

Tired of curfews and rules, he wanted to live his own life, to come and go as he pleased. But the road he thought led to freedom did not. He found himself with a Gentile boss who sent him to the pens to raise swine. He found freedom only in returning to the father's house.

The far country is full of people who left the Father so they could do as they pleased. But, sad to say, they find that life there may begin as a blast but quickly becomes bondage. They lose any freedom they have.

Freedom is found only in the Father's house! Come home!

MEANING

The second son lived in his big brother's shadow. He probably thought his father wanted him to be just like his brother. If ever he was to find personal significance and meaning for his life he thought he had to get away from home! But in the far country he lost all his dignity and self-respect. He found only shame! Broke! Homeless! A hired hand in a pig pen! Meaning and significance came only in returning to the father's house.

Anyone searching for meaning, purpose and fulfillment in some "far country" away from the Father will never find it there.

Meaning to life is found only in the Father's house! Come home!

ACCEPTANCE

The lad felt sure the whole community "back home" just did not accept him. He went to the far country searching for acceptance. He found only attention. When he ran out of money and the famine hit, nobody wanted him. Stinky pig herders are not welcome in proper social circles. He found acceptance only in returning to the father's house.

In the far country people will do anything, even shoot up with mayonnaise and peanut butter or pop Tide pods, to be accepted by the "in" crowd.

Real acceptance is found only in the Father's house. And what acceptance! "Hired hand"? No indeed. "Away with his smelly rags and bring the 'best' ROBE to honor him. Put a signet RING of authority on his finger. Put SHOES on his blistered, bleeding feet, for he is my son! (No slaves wore shoes. Only sons did!) Come home!