

*Luke 15:11-32, New King James Version (NKJV)*

*11 Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.*

*17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’*

*20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

*22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring<sup>a</sup> out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.*

*25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’*

*28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots; you killed the fatted calf for him.’*

*31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”*

The main points of the sermon:

- 1- It is very important not to judge any one while we are all still walking in our spiritual way.
- 2- Who is the older and the younger sons represent?
- 3- The gift of the free will that our Lord Jesus Christ granted to us.
- 4- The meaning of the far country.
- 5- Our possessions.
- 6- The severe famine.
- 7- The younger son feeding the swine.

- 8- The younger son came to himself.
- 9- Confession in hope.
- 10- Action.
- 11- The father meets his lost son.
- 12- The father’s gifts to his lost son.
- 13- The Older son.

## **1- It is very important not to judge any one while we are all still walking in our spiritual way:**

1-1: The younger son appeared on the beginning of his life as a man who is slave to his desires, violent in his dealing with his father, as he asked him for his portion of inheritance while his father is still alive, however at the end of his life he repented and returned back to his father. The oldest son started his life a good son, obedient to his father, serving him and at the end of his life he shut his heart towards his younger brother and stood outside the house.

**1-2: samples from the Bible and the history of the church about some saints who started their lives in a wrong way and ended it with the right way:**

### **1-2-1: The people of Nineveh as we read in **Jonah 3:5-10**, New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>5</sup> So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. <sup>6</sup> Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. <sup>7</sup> And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,*

*Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. <sup>8</sup> But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. <sup>9</sup> Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?*

*<sup>10</sup> Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.*

1-2-2: Here we need to remember the stories of **St Moses the black**, who started his life as a thief and ended as martyr monk,

1-2-3: and also we can remember the story of **St Mary the Egyptian** who started her life as a sinner and ended as a hermit who blessed St Zocima the priest.

**1-3: Samples from the New Testament about some good servants who started their lives in a good way and ended it with the wrong way:**

### **1-3-1: Diotrephes as mentioned in **3 John 1:9-10**, New King James Version (NKJV)**

*<sup>9</sup> I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the pre-eminence among them, does not receive us.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.*

**1-3-2: Demas** who was called fellow labour to St Paul as we read in ***Philemon 1:24*** , as do ***Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow labourers***. And also Demas was mentioned again as a fellow of St Paul and St Luke the writer of the Gospel according to St Luke as we read in ***Colossians 4:14*** , ***Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you***. Now this good servant ended his life in

wrong way as we read in **2 Timothy 4:10** , *for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.*

**1-3-3: Judas Iscariot** who betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ as we read in **Mark 14:10** , *Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them.*

**1-3-4: Ahithophel** as we read in **2 Samuel 16:15-23**, *New King James Version (NKJV)*

<sup>15</sup> *Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel was with him. <sup>16</sup> And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"*

<sup>17</sup> *So Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"*

<sup>18</sup> *And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. <sup>19</sup> Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."*

<sup>20</sup> *Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give advice as to what we should do."*

<sup>21</sup> *And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." <sup>22</sup> So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.*

<sup>23</sup> *Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.*

## **2- Who is oldest and the youngest sons represents?**

**2-1:** St Cyril of Alexandria said that:” **The oldest son represents the Pharisees who were very proud of their walking in righteousness according the law and in their pride are not willing that our Lord Jesus Christ love and accept the sinners**”.

**2-2:** The youngest son represents the gentiles who were sinners and the majority of them believed and repented and returned back to their father as the people of Nineveh.

## **3- The gift of the free will that our Lord Jesus Christ granted to us.**

**3-1:** it is very shameful that the gift of the free will that our Lord and our heavenly father gave us, we use it directly against Him, the young son used his free will and not only asked his father for his portion of inheritance, but also he took his portion and traveled to a far country and there he wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

**3-2: The same happened with the righteous Lot** as by his free will, he chose the plain of Jordan and he did not put in his account that the men of Sodom are exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord, as a result of his wrong use of his free will, lead Lot to loose everything, even his wife, when the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah ,as we read in *Genesis 13:10-13 , New King James Version (NKJV)* ,<sup>10</sup> *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. <sup>11</sup> Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. <sup>12</sup> Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.*

**3-3: David the prophet** and king also by his free will he committed adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and this thing displeased the Lord *2 Samuel 11:2-5, New King James Version (NKJV)* .<sup>2</sup> *Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. <sup>3</sup> So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"<sup>4</sup> Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup> And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child."<sup>6</sup> ... *2 Samuel 11:27, New King James Version (NKJV)* ,<sup>27</sup> *And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.**

#### **4- The meaning of the far country:**

4-1: St John Chrysostom<sup>1</sup> said about the far Country:” **The younger son did not travelled to the far country to be separated from God place wise , as God is everywhere , he went to the far country by his heart from God , thus the sinner escapes by his heart from God”.**

4-2: There are some believers who are close to God with their mouths and honor Him with their lips , however their hearts are far from God as we read in *Isaiah 29:13-14 , New King James Version (NKJV)* ,<sup>13</sup> *Therefore the Lord said:*

*“Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from ME, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, <sup>14</sup> Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvellous work Among this people, A marvellous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.*

<sup>1</sup> - Oration on Easter 2: 26.

4-3: St Augustine<sup>2</sup> said:” **The far country means the depending of man on himself, his power, and as a result he will lose the work of God through him , in the opposite, being near to God mean that we depend on God to work within us”**

4-4: Moses the great prophet on the beginning of his life he went to the far country and he depended on himself and used his power to kill the Egyptian as we read in *Exodus 2:11-14, New King James Version (NKJV)* ,” **Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. <sup>12</sup> So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?”**

**“ Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!”**

4-5: The thing that can make us near to God is to partake of the Eucharist with repentance as we read in *Ephesians 2:13, New King James Version (NKJV)*, <sup>13</sup> **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

4-6: It is the wish of God not to be hard with those who are in the far Country, as in some times during our life we were all in the far Country, the Lord Jesus Christ said in *John 10:16, New King James Version (NKJV)* , <sup>16</sup> **And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.**

4-7: However we need to test those who come from the far Country as not all of them are faithful , let us read *2 Kings 20:12-19 , New King James Version (NKJV)* , <sup>12</sup> **At that time Berodach-Baladan<sup>(a)</sup> the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. <sup>13</sup> And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all<sup>(b)</sup> his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.**

**“ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?”**

**So Hezekiah said, “They came from a far country, from Babylon.”**

**<sup>15</sup> And he said, “What have they seen in your house?”**

**So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”**

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<sup>2</sup> - On Repentance 8.

*<sup>16</sup> Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: <sup>17</sup> ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD. <sup>18</sup> ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”*

*<sup>19</sup> So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?”*

4-8: My brothers and sisters, all of us who are seeking the kingdom of God are travelling to the far Country as we read in **Matthew 25:14** , *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.* From this saying we need to know that it is a must to share our resources with others and work as a cohesive team to enter the Kingdom of God.

### **5- Our possessions:**

The younger son wasted his possessions with prodigal living, and here we have some points:

5-1: Our possessions are talents which had been granted to us by God Himself, and not each one has the same talents as the other , we need not hid our talents, nor do we need to waste these possessions, rather we need to invest them for the Glory of our Father as we read in **Matthew 25:14-30** , *New King James Version (NKJV)*

*<sup>14</sup> “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. <sup>15</sup> And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. <sup>16</sup> Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.*

*<sup>20</sup> “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ <sup>21</sup> His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. <sup>22</sup> He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ <sup>23</sup> His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

*<sup>24</sup> “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’*

*<sup>26</sup> “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.*

*<sup>29</sup> 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

5-2: one of the kinds of the prodigal life is to misuse your family's rights as Esau did as we read in *Genesis 25:30-33, New King James Version (NKJV)* *30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.*

5-3: One of the most wise men on this earth- king Solomon- said about the prodigal living:" it is a grasping of wind " as we read in *Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, New King James Version (NKJV)* ,

*<sup>4</sup> I made my works great; I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. <sup>5</sup> I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. <sup>6</sup> I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. <sup>7</sup> I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup> I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments<sup>61</sup> of all kinds.*

*<sup>9</sup> So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.*

*<sup>10</sup> Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. <sup>11</sup> Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.*

5-4: I would like to mention also one of those who lived a prodigal life and his end was a tragedy as we read the story in *1 Samuel 25:2-11, New King James Version (NKJV)* , *2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. He was of the house of Caleb.*

*<sup>4</sup> When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, <sup>5</sup> David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. <sup>6</sup> And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!' <sup>7</sup> Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. <sup>8</sup> Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'"*

*<sup>9</sup> So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.*

***10 Then Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, “Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?”***

His end was mentioned in ***1 Samuel 25:36-38 , New King James Version (NKJV)***

***36 Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. 37 So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things that his heart died within him and he became like a stone. 38 Then it happened, after about ten days that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.***

**5-5: we need to honor our Lord with our possessions as we read in *Proverbs 3:9, Honor the Lord with your possessions.***

**5-6: If we do not honor the Lord with our possessions , then we will be slaves to them and as a result we cannot inherent the kingdom of God as we read in *Matthew 19:16-22 , New King James Version (NKJV) , 16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good[a] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” 17 So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.[c] But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” 18 He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, ““You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ 19 ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” 20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” 21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.***

**5-7: The higher degree of dealing with the possession is to sell it and give to the church or the poor:**

**5-7-1: in The first church and the three thousands who believed , they sold their possessions and gave all who are in need *as we read in Acts 2:41-45 , New King James Version (NKJV) , 41 Then those who gladly[a] received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.***

**5-7-2: in the New Testament one of the great Apostles sold all his possessions and put the price under the feet of the Apostles as we read in *Acts 4:36-37, New King James Version (NKJV) , 36 And Joses,[a] who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.***

**5-7-3: This is exactly what happened by the great St. Anthony who was born in the year 251 AD and sold his possessions and gave it to the poor and went to the desert in the year 269 AD and became the first ever monk in this world and passed away in the year 356 AD at the age of 105 years, and till now his monastery is in the Eastern wilderness in Egypt and full of monks, and I am - Bishop Daniel of Sydney Diocese - proud to be one of his monks.**

## **6-The Severe Famine:**

6-1: in the Bible we read that the famine could happen when there is something wrong and against the Lord as we read in *1 Kings 16:29-30* , *New King James Version (NKJV)*,

*29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And because of this, Prophet Elijah proclaims the drought in the Samaria as we read in *1 Kings 17:1* , *New King James Version (NKJV)**

*17 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.”*

6-2: The famine also could happen to declare the glory of God as we read in *2 Chronicles 32:9-23* , *New King James Version (NKJV)*

*9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him laid siege against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, 10 “Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: ‘In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? 11 Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, “The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria”? 12 Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, “You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it”? 13 Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14 Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? 15 Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?”*

*16 Furthermore, his servants spoke against the Lord God and against His servant Hezekiah.*

*17 He also wrote letters to revile the Lord God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, “As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand.” 18 Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew[a] to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19 And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth—the work of men’s hands.*

*20 Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21 Then the Lord sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.*

**22 Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them<sup>(b)</sup> on every side. 23 And many brought gifts to the Lord at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.**

### **7- The young son feeding the swine.**

**<sup>15</sup> Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.**

7-1: St Augustine<sup>3</sup> said :” It seems to be that the citizen of that country represent the devil , the president of this air”

7-1-1: who sent the young son to his field or his ground The devil who apologized for not attending the Great Supper as we read in **Luke 14:15-24 , New King James Version (NKJV)**

**<sup>15</sup> Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread<sup>(a)</sup> in the kingdom of God!”**

**<sup>16</sup> Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, <sup>17</sup> and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ <sup>18</sup> But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ <sup>19</sup> And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ <sup>20</sup> Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ <sup>21</sup> So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ <sup>22</sup> And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ <sup>23</sup> Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’ <sup>24</sup> For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.”**

7-1-2: The devil in the demon-possessed requested from our Lord to let them enter into the herd of swine as they live on rottenness and it is the dwelling place for the devil, this was mention in **Matthew 8:28-32 , New King James Version (NKJV)**

**<sup>28</sup> When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes,<sup>(a)</sup> there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. <sup>29</sup> And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”**

**<sup>30</sup> Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. <sup>31</sup> So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away<sup>(b)</sup> into the herd of swine.”**

**<sup>32</sup> And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.**

<sup>3</sup> - In Luc Ser 107.

7-1-3: The swine also represents the person who lacks directions and this is work of the devil who makes the sinner lose or leave the right direction as we read in ***Proverbs 11:22*** , ***As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion***

## **8- The young son came to himself.**

*<sup>17</sup> "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!<sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,<sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."*

8-1: "Came to himself" is the beginning of the repentance Journey as what this young son did and also as the king of Nineveh did , let us read ***Jonah 3:6*** , ***Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.***

8-2: St Ambrosious<sup>4</sup> said:" came to himself means to return back to himself, this young son went far from himself, so coming to himself means to return back to God for as long as he is far from God he is resisting himself, that's why we should always be looking for God as king Solomon said in ***Ecclesiastes 12:7*** , ***Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.***

8-3: Return back to God means to return from all our hearts by putting away the foreign gods and also to serve the Only God as we read in ***1 Samuel 7:3*** , ***Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."***

8-4: One of the means to come to ourselves is to face the hard time as a result of using our free will in a wrong way or due to our pride as we read in ***Daniel 4:28-37, New King James Version (NKJV)***

***28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"***

***31 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."***

***33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.***

***34 And at the end of the time[a] I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And***

<sup>4</sup> - In Luc , 15:11-32

***His kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?” 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counsellors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.***

8-5: came to himself means to return back to God NOW, as:

8-5-1: We do not know when we are going to leave this world it may be TONIGHT, as we read in *Luke 12:15-20 , New King James Version (NKJV)*

***<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness,<sup>[a]</sup> for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”***

***<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup> And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’<sup>18</sup> So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’***

8-5-2: When we return back to God we need to finish the race and keep the faith as we read in *2 Timothy 4:7-8 , New King James Version (NKJV)*

***<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*** But why we should do this , the answer is simply because there are many levels in the kingdom of God and of course you want to be in a good rank in the kingdom of God as we read in *1 Corinthians 15:41 , New King James Version (NKJV)*

***<sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.***

## **9- Confession in hope.**

***“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,<sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”***

9-1: The young son insist to leave everything and come back to his father, he said to himself I will go to my father and say to him:” Father”, it is very important to know and be very sure that our father is our father regardless of anything done, and we are his sons despite anything.

9-2: It is also essential to experience our confession with the spirit of humility as the young son said to his father *and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*”

## **10- Action:**

<sup>20</sup> *“And he arose and came to his father.*

10-1: The younger son did left the man who sent him to fields to feed the swine without taking permission from him nor telling him; it is so important to leave behind the bad environment heading to your Mother the church.

10-2: The younger son travelled back a long journey but this time in the right direction from the far country to the house of his father not the opposite in the opposite direction..

10-3: The younger son returned back to his father’s house empty from anything , he lost all his possessions , he came by himself only , he was in need for the love of his father which is more great than the love of possessions which he lost all.

10-4: The younger son returned to his father’s house while he was in a very bad situation , he was very hungry ; yes the real food and the real rest are in our father’s house.

10-5: The way back to our father’s house is not hard nor impossible .

10-6: : The younger son returned to his father’s house because of his father’s true love.

10-7: The younger son returned to his father’s house after he was lost and after he would experience spiritual death in that far Country.

## **11- The father meets his lost son:**

*But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.<sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

<sup>22</sup> *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring<sup>a)</sup> out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.<sup>23</sup> And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;<sup>24</sup> for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.*

11-1: Out of his love, the father used to wait for his son’s return everyday as we read in *But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him*, our father is eager for our return to him.

11-2: Because of the love of the father to his lost son, he didn’t let his son complete his statement of *Make me like one of your hired servants.*”

11-3: The love of the father made his son to **ran and fell on his neck and kissed him**, the father ran, lest someone or something will delay the coming of his son, and the way back is from the far country.

## **12- The father's gifts to his lost son:**

***22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring<sup>a)</sup> out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.***

12-1: The love of the father is a practical love, he did not speak to his lost son, rather he kissed him and gave instructions to his servants.

12-2: The servants represent the priests.

12-3: ***'Bring out the best robe and put it on him :***"the robe is the first dignity that our father Adam lost" , St Augustine<sup>5</sup> said. I think the lost son came to his father either naked or wearing rotten clothes, no worries, the father changed his son's clothes by the best robe.

12-4: ***and put a ring on his hand*** the ring represents the everlasting love of the father to his lost son, the signet ring used to declare the writing of the kings that no one can revoke as we read in ***Esther 8:8 , You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."***

12-5: ***and sandals on his feet*** the sandals means the preparation for preaching the Gospel without touching the earthly things.

12-6: ***And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry*** St John Chrysostom<sup>6</sup> said :” The Fatted calf is our Lord Jesus Christ who presented His body which is without blemish as a sacrifice , and was called :” Fatted “ because of His richness as He can save the whole world “ .

12-7: Partaking from Eucharist is the source of our resurrection and our spiritual joy .

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<sup>5</sup> - In Luc 15: 11-32

<sup>6</sup> - Ibid.

### **13- The Older son:**

*<sup>25</sup> “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’*

*<sup>28</sup> “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots; you killed the fatted calf for him.’*

13-1: The true Christian Servants, The Older son was in the field of his father, he was serving there, as we read in <sup>25</sup> *“Now his older son was in the field.* So my brothers, those two sons were serving in the field, the younger son in the field of the devil, however he repented, and the older son in the field of his father and yet he does not have the virtue of love to his younger brother, who needs his love as we read *But he was angry and would not go in.* . Love is the real measure of our true Christianity. There are many servants who are serving in the house of the father and are in need to love not only those inside the fold of our church but also those who are not from the fold of our church as we read in *John 10:16, New King James Version (NKJV)*

*<sup>16</sup> And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

13-2: Do not judge ,St Ambrosious said:” The older son is one of those who do not see the plank in their eyes as we read what our Lord said in *Matthew 7:1-5 , New King James Version (NKJV)*

*7 “Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. <sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?<sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye?<sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*

The older son judged his brother by saying to his father <sup>30</sup> *But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots; you killed the fatted calf for him.’*

Here we can say these two observations:

13-2-1: The older son hated his younger brother by saying:” *But as soon as this son of yours came “if* the older son got the true Christian love, he would have said:” my brother “, not:” *this son of yours”*, we need to show mercy to our brothers who are weak and injured.

13-2-2: The older son condemned his younger brother by saying *who has devoured your livelihood with harlots;* the older son was saying the fact that his younger brother did in which he devoured his livelihood in sin as King Solomon said in *Proverbs 29:3, Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice, But a companion of harlots wastes his wealth.*

However , he did not know that our Lord Jesus Christ came to teach the tax collectors and the sinners as we read in *Luke 15:1, New King James Version (NKJV)* **15 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.** The older son did not know that the repented sinner will enter the kingdom of heaven and before the hypocrite, as we read in *Matthew 21:28-31, New King James Version (NKJV)*

<sup>28</sup> *“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’<sup>29</sup> He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went.<sup>30</sup> Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.<sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?”*

*They said to Him, “The first.”*

*Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.*

13-3: The older son represents the Pharisee who condemned the tax collector as we read in *Luke 18:9-14, New King James Version (NKJV)*

<sup>9</sup> *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:<sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’<sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

13-4: The older son called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.<sup>27</sup> *And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’* And this servant who had been called by the older son represents the prophets of the Old Testament who most of them prophesied for the acceptance of the gentiles, for example what prophet Isaiah said in *Isaiah 11:10* , *“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.”*

13-5: The Jews will accept Christ our Lord at the End of the days as *Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him,* and this exactly what had been mentioned by St Paul as we read in *Romans 11:25-36 , New King James Version (NKJV)*

<sup>25</sup> *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.<sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved;<sup>[a]</sup> as it is written<sup>7</sup>:*

*“The Deliverer will come out of Zion,  
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

<sup>27</sup> *For this is My covenant with them,  
When I take away their sins.”*

<sup>7</sup> - Isaiah 59:20, 21

*<sup>28</sup> Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup> For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, <sup>31</sup> even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. <sup>32</sup> For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.*

*<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

*<sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord?  
Or who has become His counselor?”<sup>[E]</sup>*

*<sup>35</sup> “Or who has first given to Him  
And it shall be repaid to him?”<sup>[d]</sup>*

*<sup>36</sup> For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

Final prayer by bishop Daniel of Sydney diocese:

Oh , Lord – the lover of mankind- make us learn from the lost son how to repent in the right way , make us feel your true love to everyone, and keep us in Your house and in Your Holy Name for ever and ever Amen.