

# The Road Back Home

## “Awaiting the Times of Refreshing”

### I. SCRIPTURE

Acts 3:19 – “Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of YAHUAH [the LORD].”

### II. THE PRODIGAL’S RETURN HOME

Exactly three (3) weeks ago today – during our second night of ten (10) days of prayer for repentance, for a return of our lives back to our Father from Whom we have turned away – that we reflected on story of the Prodigal Son. We pictured a young man, the younger of two (2) brothers, who was determined to live his life in the way that he wanted to live it, and it was definitely not in the way that his father wanted him to live it.

And to the girls listening here today, whether young, old, or in between, please don’t think that the Prodigal Son story was spoken specifically for the boys. It was not! I remember a song that was written and recorded in 1979 by Robert Hazard, that was made very popular in a single [hit song when sung] by female singer Cyndi Lauper. It became the second most popular musical hit on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart in late 1983 and early 1984.<sup>1 2</sup> The lyrics go something like this, and our attitude today hasn’t changed much, except that we have become more persistent, more selfish:

“I come home in the morning light, my mother says when you gonna live your life right? Oh mother dear ... oh girls just want to have fun. The phone rings in the middle of the night, my father yells what you gonna do with your .3life. Oh daddy dear... but girls they wanna have fun. That's all they really want, some fun, when the working day is done, oh girls, they wanna have fun... oh ... (girls and boys wanna have fun, girls wanna have)...”

You know, the prodigal son just wanted to have some fun, to experience the fun of life for a while, to see the world, to make it on his own away from mom and dad.

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<sup>1</sup> “Robert Hazard Biography”, *AllMusic*; <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/robert-hazard-mn0000291054/biography>, retrieved July 15, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> “Rolling Stone & MTV: ‘100 Greatest Pop Songs’: 1-50”, VH1 (1997-2012)”, *RockOnTheNet.com.*; <http://www.rockonthenet.com/archive/2000/rsmtv100.htm>, retrieved May 31, 2012.

We remembered three (3) weeks ago that it was only *after* this prodigal son had fallen on hard times, after he had spent all that he had and a famine had come, and he had ended up in a pigsty feeding the pigs, and that he would have gladly filled his stomach with the slop, the pods that they ate (Luke 15:16). It was then that:

- 1) He had a change of mind; he “came to himself” (Luke 15:17).
- 2) He turned around, left the pigsty behind him, and began heading back on the road from where he had come, in the direction back to his father.
- 3) He kept on walking in the direction of his father until he could see his father’s face, who had been actively waiting for his return.

I think that the picture on the front of today’s bulletin, for those you who were with us on that particular night of prayer three (3) weeks ago, is a pretty good image of the condition of the boy and the father as we remembered it, as we prayed, as we pictured the boy being embraced again by his father: his clothes filthy, his body still stinking of the pigsty, physically tired from the trip home, and emotionally distraught as he begins to confess his sins, his wretched condition to his father (Luke 15:21).

Yet, despite the boy’s condition, his father “**when he was still a great way off ... saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him**” (Luke 15:20). (And, you can see his father doing that in today’s picture.) And not just that, but as the parable goes on, we learn that his father called for his “**best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And (said) 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 15:22b-24).

### III. REPENTING OF OUR POVERTY

You know, when you and I think about the story of the Prodigal Son, we probably think that it was a no-brainer for this prodigal boy to want to go back home. After all, he had no money left, he was mistreated, exploited actually by his employer. He was starving. He had no friends or anyone that really cared about him because the text says that “no one gave him anything” (Luke 15:16). His condition was dire!

We look at ourselves today, and we think, “I am nothing like that guy. Life is pretty good for me.” We think, “I make pretty good money. Well yeah, I know that my employer may sometimes take advantage of me, but my paycheck is pretty decent. And yeah, I have some pretty nice threads. I have a decent savings account for that rainy day ahead and a retirement account that building up, too. So yeah, I think I’m

going to be ready for times ahead. Oh yeah, and I even have enough to give to others, even the other prodigals. So, I'm nothing like that particular guy."

For some others, maybe we're not really that well-off. Maybe we're in-between jobs right now, or we're retired and living on a fixed income. We may realize that maybe we're not really as well off as some of our other brothers and sisters, but we still feel that we're okay enough to get by. After all, we can get food stamps if we need to, or visit the local food bank. There's other government help, too, if I need it."

Do you feel this way today? That you're doing good enough? Do you think that when YAHUSHA [Jesus] told this parable, that it had to do with the prodigal boy reaching the bottom of his life in a material sense? But that was not what YAHUSHA [Jesus] was thinking. If you remember the context, it was "then [that] all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes [had] complained, saying, 'this Man receives sinners and eats with them' [and] so [it was in this context that] He spoke this parable to them..." (Luke 15:1-3a).

Or when we are talking about having enough to eat, as I asked last week, "do you think that when YAHUSHA [Jesus] tells us to pray of the Father: 'give us today our daily bread', that the primary meaning of this text, our demand from Him in "The Lord's Prayer" is about having enough physical bread?" For YAHUSHA [Jesus] talked about this type of bread, for the day after he withdrew from the place where He had fed the 5,000 men from one boy's five (5) bread loaves and two (2) small fish (John 6:9-12), to those who had followed Him, He said "most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of YAH [God] is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:32b-33) And then He also said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35b)

YAHUSHA [Jesus] today still speaks to us of our attitude of self-sufficiency when He says, "because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — [that] I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be [truly] rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent." (Revelation 3:17-19)

#### IV. THE ROAD BACK HOME

So today, please consider again to whom YAHUSHA [Jesus] was talking when I told the prodigal's story. It was to the tax collectors and the sinners [who] drew near to Him to hear Him (Luke 15:1), that He tells of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7), the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), and follows up with The Lost [Parable] Son (Luke 15:11-32). As I can imagine that especially the tax collectors and also some of the other sinners had an adequate nest egg, there is no doubt in my mind that "the lost" were those who were in *spiritual* poverty, rather than in *physical* poverty. There is a question that we should be asking ourselves today, especially those of us who attended and are emerging from the ten (10) days of repentance: "from what exactly have we repented?" What exactly have we "chosen" to leave behind? To turn away from and to put some distance between? As we have chosen to leave those particular things, the "pigsty" lifestyle behind us... what are those things exactly?

The tax collectors had chosen to leave their very profitable jobs, their livelihoods behind to follow YAHUSHA [Jesus]. The prostitutes and other notorious sinners had to promise Him that they would "sin no more", as they chose to follow Him. Even the men (and women) who had sought an easier life of having YAHUSHA [Jesus] as their own personal king, bread maker, and miracle worker (John 6:15, 30), could not ultimately fathom the thought of a lifestyle of "eating" Him as "the Bread of Life", of "believing in Him as from [God] the One who sent Him" (John 6:29). Rather, they viewed Him with their own perceptions of Who He was.

So, ask yourself: "what exactly have I chosen to leave behind, as I turn around and head back toward YAHUSHA [Jesus]?" And the answer should be that you are leaving anything, and everything in your life, in your lifestyle that has or may come between you and Him, on the road leading back home to Him.

#### V. CARRYING OUR REPENTANCE WITH US (As Our Daily Cross)

Please remember in the story of the Prodigal Son, that the Prodigal had developed his repentance as he *made his choice* to turn around, and as he actually did turn around and leave his pigsty lifestyle behind. His repentance was "**father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son**" (as quoted by YAHUSHA [Jesus] in Luke 15:18b-19a). And as he reached his father, who was waiting for him, what did he say to his father? The answer is that he had carried the same repentance with him the entire way on the road back home to his father, because he quoted it again when he met him again: "**father, I have sinned**

**against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son”** (as quoted by YAHUSHA [Jesus] in Luke 15:21b). What that means, then, if you didn’t catch it, is that the prodigal boy kept his repentance with him, in his heart, until the time that he actually returned home, after he had travelled all those miles back to his father.

Now, let’s take another look at today’s scripture. After Peter and John had healed the lame beggar at the gate to the temple at the time of prayer, a crowd of people were astonished at the miracle AND (Acts 3:1-11). Then Peter spoke to them accusing them of disowning YAHUSHA, and choosing the man and murderer (Barabbas) instead, when Pilot had decided to let Him go (Acts 3:12-18). Peter said, “now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders”, [but now] “repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of YAHUAH [the LORD].”

Today, brothers and sisters, you too may have acted in ignorance, as you have chosen to follow the crowd, to disown YAHUSHA [Jesus] by your choice to follow the will of men (and women), rather than the will of YAHUAH [God]. For if there is anything that you choose, that has been or continues to be of more value than your commitment to YAHUAH [God], and pause now to think about it... is there anything that you spend in doing than in communication with and doing the will of YAHUAH [God]? Is there anything that you would be unwilling to give up at an instance’s notice for Him when it is required. If search your heart and you are worried about the answer to this question, then I am asking you too to “repent therefore, and turn again, [so] that your sins may be blotted out”.

## VI. AWAITING THE TIMES OF REFRESHING

And as you confess these things that come to mind now, please put them together with what you have already chosen to confessed and turn away from during the ten (10) days of repentance from which we have just emerged. Yes, put them together, and store this repentance in your hearts and minds, and carry them with you as did the Prodigal, so that you may have them ready to recite for “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of YAHUAH [the LORD]” and YAHUSHA [Jesus] **“when he [sees you] and [has] compassion, and [runs and falls] on [your] neck and [kisses you]”** (Luke 15:20). These times, dear brothers and sisters, are the times of refreshing that will come to us, when we will one day soon be in His presence.

I look forward to that day, when His “best robe [will He put on me], and put a ring on [my] hand and sandals on [my] feet. And (will) bring the fatted calf and kill it, and [have] us eat and be merry”. (Luke 15:22b-23)

Finally, dear brothers and sister, please remember when the Church was thinking “I am rich, [and I] have become wealthy, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17), that YAHUSHA [Jesus] at the same time is telling us, “as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. [For] behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. [And] to him [or her] who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” (Revelation 3:19-21)

## VII. BENEDICTION

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly”.

Amen. Even so, come, ADONAI YAHUSHA [Lord Jesus]!

[And now, may] the grace of our ADONAI YAHUSHA HA’MASHIACH [Lord Jesus Christ] be with you all.

Amen.

### References & Credits:

- 1 “Robert Hazard Biography”, *AllMusic*, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/robert-hazard-mn0000291054/biography>, retrieved July 15, 2015.
- 2 “Rolling Stone & MTV: ‘100 Greatest Pop Songs’: 1-50”, VH1 (1997-2012)”, *Rock On The Net.com*. <http://www.rockonthenet.com/archive/2000/rsmtv100.htm>, retrieved May 31, 2012.
- 3 “Girls Just Want to Have Fun”, Puffy AmiYumi, Cyndi Lauper, LyricFind;