

A vertical poster featuring a sunset over the ocean. The sky is filled with orange and blue clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon. The ocean waves are visible in the middle ground. The text 'Where is Your' is written in a large, outlined, sans-serif font, with 'Where' and 'Your' in blue and 'is' in orange. The text is positioned in the upper half of the image.

Where
is
Your

Far

Country

A Message by *Tom Mooty*
West End Baptist Senior Pastor

THIS IS ANOTHER MESSAGE

in the

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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO:

Take as many copies as you need;

Pray over as many copies as you take;

Distribute as many copies as you pray over!

WHERE IS YOUR FAR COUNTRY?

(Luk 15:11-12) And Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me". And he divided unto them his living.

(Luk 15:13) - And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

(Luk 15:14-16) - And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

(Luk 15:17) - And when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants

have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger!

(Luk 15:18-19) - I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of thy hired servants".

(Luk 15:20) - And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

(Luk 15:21) - And the son said unto him, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.

(Luk 15:22-24) - But the father said to his servants, "Bring the best robe, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and kill fatted calf; and let us eat, and be merry: because my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is

found. And they began to be merry.

(Luk 15:25) - Now his elder son was in the field; and he heard the music; and asked one of the servants what it meant.

(Luk 15:27) - And the servant said, "Your brother has come home; and your father has received him.

(Luk 15:28-30) - And he was angry, and said to his father, "I have served you well all these years and you never gave me as much as a little goat; but as soon as this son has come back home, you throw him a party!

Luk 15:31) - And the father said: "Yes, son, you have always been with me; and all that I have will be yours (as the elder son); but it was right that we should celebrate; for your brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.

The account of "The Prodigal Son" who

left home for the "far country" is a favorite, well-used text among preachers who have jail ministries.

In fact, both the boys are "prodigals" in somewhat different senses; but the main character - the primary character in this narrative is the waiting father who yearned for the return of his foolish child.

Most of us do not look for ourselves in this narrative. We try to maintain a decent home life; and don't make it a practice to waste what little substance we might have on people of low morals. Consequently, we eliminate ourselves from this passage of Scripture; and relegate it to the jail ministry.

I. WHERE IS YOUR FAR COUNTRY?

The far country has been designated as being any place that is "one step away from

God". It is located on the corner of "Distrust of God's Plan" and "Misuse of God's Will" in the twin communities of Self-Interest and Self-Love.

The older brother who was living with his father was living in the far country though he never changed his address. In reality, the far country is located in the heart of the person who does not trust the father.

You can be living in a far country without being aware of it. Do you have the attitude of the younger son who went to his father and said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me".

In reality, he was saying to the father, "drop dead old man. I want what is mine. I want it now! I wanna live my own life according to my own plan".

A. Are you saying, "Give me the prospect to go and do as I please without any controls upon my

appetites and my ambitions”?

B. Are you saying, “Give me the pleasure that the world has to offer to satisfy the appetites of my human nature”?

C. Are you saying, “Give me the position that I want and deserve?”

This could refer to a place in the home, on the team, in the group, and in the business. A selfish seeking for a position of privilege and power, without assuming the responsibility that goes with that position, identifies us as a twin brother of the younger son.

D. Are you saying, “Give me the popularity that I want”?

Wanting acceptance and approval is not all bad; but, when living in the spotlight becomes the dominating motive of life, we may soon find ourselves identified with the younger son.

E. Are you saying, "Give me the prosperity that I can acquire"?

It is so easy to measure success in terms of things that we acquire and possess and have. Without being aware of it, we can find ourselves in the far country as we achieve one success after another in our business or vocational life.

What about in the realm of religion? Are we always demanding for God to "Give me"? There are some who look upon God as being their servant. They desire His Forgiveness without any repentance; or His Concern without any cooperation with His Work.

A. Are you asking God for guidance so that you can get rich, rather than asking Him for guidance so you might be righteous?

B. Are you asking God for protection without any thought at all of fulfilling His purpose for your life?

C. Are you saying to God, "Give me heaven" without any concern at all on working with Him to help others to escape hell and go to heaven too?

It is within the realm of the possible to be nothing more than a parasite in the Family of God. To be a parasite places you in the far country without your being aware of it.

II. THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF THE FAR COUNTRY.

A. Living the self-centered life does not honor God or fulfill His Purpose for us.

In fact, the chief end of man is to honor God and to serve Him forever. Only what we do for God is going to have any significance for us and for others 100 years from now.

B. Living the self-centered life does not benefit others.

In fact, it hurts and hinders others; and prevents them from becoming what God wants them to be.

C. Living the self-centered life does not help us; and prevents us from becoming what God wants us to be.

In fact, it lowers us from the position of dignity as a member of the human family. A person who focuses his attention only upon himself may achieve prospect, pleasure, position, popularity, and prosperity; and might be able to enjoy many of the pleasures of the world. But, if he is not really careful, he will experience a bleak, desolate famine in the innermost part of his being.

III. RETURNING HOME FROM THE FAR COUNTRY.

The prodigal son who left home was unloving, ungrateful, uncaring, immature, and self-destructive; but it must be said to his credit that, though he was very foolish, he did not remain in the far country. He did not remain in the place of physical blight, desolation, hunger, or loneliness.

The prodigal son who stayed home was unloving, ungrateful, uncaring, immature, and self-destructive; and it must be said to his discredit that he was very foolish, and he chose to remain that way. He never left home but he was in his own "far country" all the time; and he lived in the place of spiritual blight, desolation, hunger, or loneliness.

A. One of the prodigal sons came to his senses; stopped and took an inventory; and the other did not.

B. One of them recognized his mistakes; and wisely concluded that he had chosen the wrong

road that led to the wrong destination; and the other did not.

C. One son accepted responsibility for his condition; he did not blame his father; and, as far as we can tell, he did not blame his brother or his mother. He was honest with himself; and did not pass the buck by blaming society; and the other son did all those things; had all those feelings; manifested all those attitudes.

D. One of the two was wise in that he resolved in his mind and heart to return to his father; and this attitude in his mind led to a change in the direction of his body; and the other apparently did not have a change in his mind or his life.

E. One had his attitude adjusted from being a parasite to being a contributor. He began his slide into the far country by demanding, "Give me" and concluded his return home by

requesting, "Make me one of your hired servants" - and the other son did not!

The exciting return of the wayward son from the far country brings about a great change in the situation. The father had waited in agony and prayer. Day by day he had fed the fatted calf looking forward to the time when the son would come home. As the son met the father, he cried out in repentance; and the father dealt with him in terms of mercy, forgiveness, and sonship.

The continued action of the wayward son who stayed home could have added to the great change in the situation if he had manifested an attitude of repentance; and the father could have dealt with him in terms of mercy, forgiveness, and sonship.

You would be wise to come praying to the father: "Make me a giver instead of a getter";

"A helper rather than a hinderer"; "A contributor rather than a user".

This is a great welcome waiting for you:

The Father God wants to welcome you.

Christ the Son wants to welcome you.

The Saints who have gone on want to welcome you.

The Church wants to welcome you.

Friend, it is as we say: "God loves you to the moon and back"; and He proved it - BIG TIME - by allowing His only begotten Son to die an agonizing, horrifying death so that our sins could be forgiven. Love Him back! Accept Him as Savior! You'll always be glad you did!

God bless you!

Tom Mooty: Newport, TN (2024)



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