

## GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

God's love story reveals itself in our stories, experiences, and aspirations. We are all prodigal sons and daughters. There are many times in our lives when we would "sell our souls" in order to pursue our passions. We pursued what we wanted without regard for others or God. We have sowed our oats, thrown ourselves into careless pleasures, spent what we know we ought to have saved, turned our backs on those we love and abused gifts we have been given. We even hit bottom and realized the silliness and self-destruction of it all. We needed to come home. We knew we erred and needed a gentle presence to show us God's unconditional love. This wayward journey home changed us.

As much as we need to be welcomed, we are also the one who needs to do the welcoming and mercy giving. Those we love need our guidance, but they don't always take it. We know that what they are doing is off the mark, self-destructive and wrong. We have to let them go and let it happen, even though they might get hurt. As we wait and hope, they choose to make their way back to us. They don't need us to judge them. They have done enough of that to themselves. We immediately embrace them and are just happy they're home. God uses us to help heal them. Knowing how much we craved understanding and forgiveness ourselves, we can now freely give it away. God uses what he has taught us to teach others.

We are also the entitled ones. At least we "think" we are entitled. After all, we work hard for what we have. We cannot get our heads around the idea that someone can get something that I really deserve! If I do what I'm supposed to do, I ought to be rewarded for that, right? If I do something wrong, I ought to pay the consequences. This is justice, isn't it? This is not God's justice. God is all about love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness. God's justice is love freely given without merit. We carry the stories of the prodigal son, the unconditional forgiving father, and the entitled angry brother with us. When we make friends with all three, humbly telling those stories to others makes us Christ's ambassadors.