

Wilmington
12/4/68
P.M.

"The Homesickness of the Spoul"

Bailey
11/3/60
P.M.

Scripture Lesson:- Luke 15: 11 - 24.

Text:- Luke 15: 17. "And when he came to himself, he said, How many of the hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

Introduction:- The prodigal son was away from home. "When he came to himself", he felt he was homesick. Homesick for whom? Homesick for his father. Homesick for father's embrace and welcome which he had missed for some time. His soul also was homesick. How shall we view it? Let us see.

We shall first view the unrest of sin. The prodigal was an exile; he was in a far country. It was the memory of home that filled his heart.

Some conceptions of the awakened sinner make him him the prey of an angry and awakened conscience, And I know that sometimes, when a man comes to himself, he can see nothing and hear nothing but the terrors and judgments of a sovereign God. But it was not terror that smote the prodigal. It was home, home, home, for which his soul was crying. He saw the farm, nestled among the hills, and the weary oxen coming home at eventide, and the happy circle gathered round the fire, and his father crying to heaven for the wanderer. He came to himself and he was homesick.

Jesus would have us learn from that wickedness is not the homeland of the soul. That all the un-

rest and the dissatisfaction of the wicked is just the craving of the heart for home. We were not fashioned to be at home in sin. We bear the image of God, and God is goodness. The native air of this mysterious heart of ours is the love and purity and joy of heaven. So when a man sins and all the time hungers for better things, it is not the hunger for the impossible; it is the hunger for home. My dear sir, do not forget that you can satisfy that hunger instantly. To night, in a single instant of time, you may come home. God is waiting on you. Christ says, "Return this very hour! Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow!" We were made for goodness and righteousness and holiness, and the native air of the soul is love and truth. We shall always be dissatisfied, always homesick, if we are trying to live in sin and away from home.

II.

He was lonely. We know that sin makes one lonely. The homesick man is always lonely. It does not matter how crowded the streets are, how bright the city is, the throng and tumult of its life will not keep a homesick man from being lonely. Sin has a great power that makes for loneliness. Surely but surely, if a man lives in sin, he drifts apart into spiritual isolation. And the strange thing is that the sins we call social sins, are the very sins that drive a man apart from his fellows. That loneliness is the homesickness of the soul. It is

the heart craving for home again. God grant, that if there is in this house one man who is drifting from wife, from children, from mother and sister and friend, he drawn by the love of Christ, may come home.

III.

The craving for God. We speak of heaven as our home, and in many ways that is a true expression. If in heaven we shall meet again those whom we loved and lost, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT heaven will be a homelike place. But in a deeper sense, heaven is not our home. In the deepest sense, heaven is not our home, but God is.

"Our God, our help in ages past,
Our help for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And, our eternal home!"

I believe that this is the truth. God is the true home of the human soul. You would have thought that in a world like this, so full of interest, so full of music, so full of delight, mankind would have lived in contentment without God. In the book of Psalms we find that passionate craving. "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!" We do not crave for God because he is glorious. We do not crave for God because he is the sovereign of the universe. We are just homesick. We crave for God because he is our home.

IV.

A sure proof of God. This homesickness of the soul is one of the surest proofs of God. It is an argument more powerful than any philosopher can

bring to prove the existence of God. No one denied that the souls still pant for God. Hearts still thirst for him, as truly as the Psalmist did. And unless life is a sham, and unless we are born to be mocked, there cannot be homesickness without a home. My souls craving for God assures me that God is. All other arguments may fail me, but this one argument, when I am weak, and lonely and sad, that alone brings me to the door of God, my home.

Conclusion:- I will arise and go to my father, the prodigal said. Thank God; we need no money for that journey. Is there someone here who has been far away from home? Is there some one here who is going home, to God, this very hour? God grant that more than one shall arise and go to his father.

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