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ABSTRACT:
This piece aims to interpret the pericope of Luke 15:11-32, the parable of the Prodigal Son, for parents with children fallen away from the faith and other children with them. Its purpose is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ during those difficult moments, offering hope and trust in the loving God of the merciful Father. It is aims to explore the graces that God bestows upon parents who mourn the estrangement of their child.

Interpretation of Luke 15:11-32
For Parents of Children Who Have Fallen Away from the Faith and Have Other Children at Home

by Anisabel Palma

Luke 15:11-32
The Parable of the Lost Son

11 Then he said, “A man had two sons, 12 and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. 13 After a few days, the younger son collected
all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. 14 When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. 15 So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. 16 And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. 17 Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. 18 I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’ 20 So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ 22 But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, 24 because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began. 25 Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. 26 He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. 27 The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. 30 But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’ 31 He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. 32 But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”
This piece aims to interpret the pericope of Luke 15:11-32 focusing on parents with at least a child fallen away from the faith and other children with them. Its purpose is to clarify how the Good News of Jesus Christ brings hope during those difficult moments, offering guidance and trust in the loving God of the merciful Father. Alfred Plummer, a famous Anglican theologian of the twentieth century known for his work on the Gospel of Luke, notes that this parable has “been called Evangelium in Evangelio, because of the number of gracious truths which illustrates.”\(^1\) I hope to contribute to the graces that God bestows upon parents who mourn the estrangement of their child.

11 Then he said, ‘A man had two sons…’ Regardless of the number of children parents have, they will find consolation and the love of God as they read this passage from the Gospel of Luke, particularly if one of the children has fallen away. This story is unique to the Gospel of Luke as is unique the story of the parents and their children.

12 and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. As depicted in the story, the younger son requests an early distribution of his inheritance.\(^2\) At the time this parable was told, as well as in contemporary times, the customary practice was to distribute the inheritance after the death of the benefactor. However, as noted by Pablo T. Gadenz, a renowned biblical scholar, it was possible, though not encouraged, to distribute the inheritance while the benefactor was still alive. In this case, the younger son takes initiative with his demand, essentially treating his father as if he were already deceased.\(^3\) Despite the son’s intention to flee, it’s noteworthy that he still recognizes his father’s authority, offering a glimmer of hope as he prepares to leave.

How incredibly painful it must be for parents to hear their children request their inheritance while they are still alive. Even if a child has

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not made such a request, parents may have felt used by their children to obtain financial resources for less than noble reasons. Jesus was not ignorant of these possibilities in human relationships, and he offered consolation with a parable like this one. Jesus understood the depths to which we are capable of sinking and how we can hurt others in the pursuit of our lowest desires. Gadenz underscores a noteworthy aspect wherein, notwithstanding the absence of any obligation to partition the inheritance and despite the consequential shame, the father grants the request out of respect for his son’s free decision. Given that the firstborn was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance, it can be assumed that the younger son received one-third of the property. These children are aware that these resources do not belong to them yet, and it is not the appropriate time to request them. Undeterred, they still proceed to demand what they want.

13 After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. Plummer comments that the younger son “leaves nothing behind that can minister to his desires; nothing to guarantee his return.” Parents who have experienced a situation where their children left soon after their requests were granted may understand the feelings of the father in the parable. As the younger son collected his belongings to leave, the father’s heart must have been filled with sadness and disappointment. Jesus does not mention what the father did or said in response to his son’s departure. The silence on the father’s actions can leave us to wonder about his feelings and thoughts at that moment. Perhaps the father’s silence was an expression of his deep love for his son, allowing him the freedom to choose his own path, even if it meant leaving his family and squandering his inheritance. The father’s silence may also indicate that he recognized the need for his son to learn from his mistakes and find his own way back to the family. Perhaps the father was shocked by his son’s action and was left without words, hurt to the core, questioning himself about what he had done wrong. Regardless of the reason for his silence, the father’s love for his son was evident in his act of respecting the son’s decision.

4 Ibid.
14 When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. Jesus highlights the son’s freedom to spend all his inheritance just before a severe famine struck the country, emphasizing the son’s imprudent behavior. In this situation, Plummer observes the working of Providence in action, both in the timing of the famine and in the location where the younger son had gone to indulge himself. Plummer notes the younger son’s prodigality didn’t help him to gain any friends who could help him in his time of need throughout the land. As the prominent American New Testament scholar and Catholic theologian Luke Timothy Johnson notes, this type of famine was a frequent occurrence in an area where agriculture was a hazardous enterprise, adding to the son’s difficulties. The emphasis on famine serves to highlight the son’s desperate situation and the consequences of his actions. Parents never wish for their children to experience the pain and suffering that the younger son went through. Seeing children struggle and suffer due to their own choices can be heartbreaking. Parents may find themselves blaming themselves for enabling their children’s destructive behavior by always rescuing them from their problems instead of teaching them the importance of hard work, responsibility, and self-control. By nature, parents want to protect their children and shield them from pain, but sometimes, unintentionally hinder their growth and development by not allowing them to face the consequences of their actions. As difficult as it may be, it is essential to allow children to make mistakes and learn from them so they can develop into responsible and independent individuals. In this difficult moment, it is crucial for parents to hold on to faith and to remind them they are not alone in facing these challenges and that God is with them, offering comfort and strength. In spite of overwhelming feelings of guilt, shame, and despair when a child has fallen away from the faith, it is important to remember that God is merciful and forgiving. Parents trust in His love and grace and pray for guidance and wisdom as they navigate this difficult situation.

15 So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. According to Johnson, this verse holds significant

cultural and religious significance. He explains that “the herd of pigs represents something unclean for Jews. To tend the pigs of a Gentile is about as alienated as a Jew could imagine being. In the Mishnah, raising pigs is forbidden to Jews. This highlights the extent to which the younger son was willing to abandon his Jewish heritage and identity and how far he had strayed from his family and community. In this context, Jesus uses this verse to help parents understand their children when they receive news of their reckless behavior and lifestyle. Even though children may have strayed far from their upbringing and heritage, this does not mean they are beyond redemption. As difficult as it may be, parents must hold on to hope and faith in the belief that their children can still return to their roots and live a life of purpose and meaning.

16 And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. This verse serves as a poignant illustration of the dire circumstances the younger son found himself in after squandering his inheritance. He felt he was hitting rock bottom as he was now reduced to tending to swine and longing to eat the pods meant for pigs. This highlights the depth of his desperation and the extent to which he had fallen. The fact that he was not even allowed to eat the food of the pigs, considered the most unclean animal by Jewish standards, emphasizes the gravity of his situation and the irony that despite his attempts to gain independence and live a life of freedom, he ended up in a state of utter dependence and humiliation. Jesus uses this image to convey the gravity of sin and the consequences of straying away from God. It serves as a reminder that even when hitting rock bottom, God’s love and mercy can still save us, as we will see in the conclusion of this story.

17 Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. According to Gadenz, the phrase “coming to his senses” is significant because it shows that the son has become aware of his dire situation and realizes he is lost. This awareness would not have been possible without the experiences of hunger, poverty, and alienation that he endured. The son’s realization that he is lost is a crucial step in his journey towards

repentance and reconciliation with his father. This realization comes from within the son himself; he is not coerced or forced into it by anyone else. This shows the son has taken responsibility for his actions and is willing to take the necessary steps to make amends. Plummer puts it in these words: “want rekindles what his revelry had extinguished.”10 After becoming aware of his dire situation, the younger son realizes the stark contrast between his current state and the abundance of his father’s household. This moment of clarity prompts him to recall the comforts and security he had left behind. Have faith in God, for just like the prodigal son, estranged children will also experience a moment of grace and return home.

18 I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.” Gadenz observes two things in this verse. First, he notes the use of the verb “get up,” which is one of the verbs used for Jesus’ resurrection. Thus, by his repentance, the “dead” son is already coming “to life again.” The second observation is the son’s confession, which is not only rehearsed but also repeated in verse 21, indicating its importance and emphasis. This confession echoes similar confessions in the Old Testament, which view sins against individuals ultimately as offenses against God. Despite feeling unworthy to be called a son, the younger son still plans to confess to his father. Plummer notes “the repentance is as real and decided as the fall. He prepares full confession but no excuse, and having made a good resolution, he acts upon it without delay.”11

On the other hand, Johnson notes how the son’s statement beautifully captures the interconnectedness of the relationship between God and humans. Through his confession, the son acknowledges not only his wrongdoing against his father but also against God. The son’s repentance is not only an act of seeking forgiveness from his earthly father but also an act of seeking reconciliation with God.12

While it may seem that the younger son’s actions were solely his own, they were really a response to the grace of God poured upon him. God always takes the initiative to call us to repentance and abundant life, and the son chose to respond. Just as the father respected the son’s decision to take his inheritance early and go to a distant land, God respects our decision to enter a path of repentance or not. Ultimately, it is up to us to choose whether or not to respond to God’s call, and it is through God’s grace that we are able to do so. Nevertheless, parents can immensely help their children to respond sooner to God’s invitation. One way to do this is through intercessory prayer. By praying for their children, parents can ask God to soften their hearts and help them to recognize their need for repentance and the abundance of life that comes with it. Ultimately, it is up to the children to accept God’s invitation, but parents’ prayer can play a powerful role in facilitating their spiritual journey.

19 I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’

Johnson emphasizes the contrast between the son’s previous privileged status as a member of the family and heir to property and his current status as a hired laborer with no claim of permanence. While Torah required the payment of wages to such workers, it did not require a personal relationship. Interestingly, even as the son requests this lesser status, he still uses the familiar greeting “father,” which evokes a different sort of response. This highlights the tension between the son’s desire to repent and return to his father’s household while also acknowledging the seriousness of his transgressions and the need for appropriate consequences. Once someone reaches rock bottom, it is essential they become fully aware of the gravity of their actions and the extent of what they have lost. Only when they have hit their lowest point can they begin to see the error of their ways and acknowledge the harm they have caused themselves and others. This realization is often painful and can be a difficult process to go through, but it is a necessary step towards true repentance and healing. Parents can support their children through this process by offering love and understanding while also holding them accountable for their actions. Encouraging them to

seek help from professionals or support groups can also be beneficial to confront and accept their past and move towards a brighter future.

20 So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. In this part, Gadenz emphasizes the father in the lookout for his son.\footnote{Gadenz, \textit{The Gospel of Luke: Catholic Commentary On Sacred Scripture}, 276.} Note how the father remains on his property and does not go out looking for his son. Instead, he patiently waits for his son’s return, but this waiting is not passive. The fact that the father catches sight of his son from a distance shows that he was paying close attention to the road, eagerly anticipating his son’s return. In words of Plummer “there is no cessation of the seeking until the lost is found.”\footnote{Plummer, “The Gospel According to S. Luke,” 369.} The father does not get distracted with his own tasks and forget about his estranged son but keeps a watchful eye on the road, longing for his son’s return. This is a call for parents to await their children’s return. The father’s anticipation was active, impelling him to run to meet him as soon as he saw him from afar, even though the act of the father running towards his son was considered beneath the dignity of an old man. The father knew this, but he didn’t care. His joy for his son’s return was greater than human respect. The father didn’t think about his own dignity or what people would say, but rather that the deepest desire of his heart was being fulfilled before his eyes. And that was enough. This father, who was previously humiliated and offended, gives his son what he knows he needs for healing: a warm welcome and fatherly love. The father knew that the son had already reproached himself and acknowledged his mistakes before returning home. The father’s embrace and kiss of his son are not only a sign of his forgiveness but also an affirmation of the son’s worth and dignity as a beloved member of the family. This scene teaches us about the power of unconditional love and the importance of forgiveness in healing broken relationships.

21 His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ Finally, the son is before his father and says the words he had rehearsed while away. This shows he understands the seriousness of his actions and the magnitude of the
forgiveness he is asking for. Despite this feeling of unworthiness, the son
still plans to address his confession to his father. This shows he is taking
the first steps towards reconciliation and restoration of the relationship.
The son’s confession is a pivotal moment in the story of the prodigal
son. It shows he has hit rock bottom, acknowledged his mistakes, taken
responsibility for his actions, and is prepared to return home.

When the time of return seems to be close, it is important not to force
children back before they are ready. Rushing them may lead to a repeat of
the same mistakes. While it may be a long wait for some parents, there’s
always hope. Their children will have a moment of repentance. Faith
and all prayer efforts will eventually be rewarded. It is possible that some
parents may not see their children return in this life, but they are invited
to trust in the merciful God that never gives up on anyone.

22 But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and
put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Take the
fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast. Gadenz and
Johnson both highlight the father’s swift actions upon his son’s return.
Gadenz notes that the father interrupts his son’s rehearsed confession
and orders his servants to restore the son to his position in the family,
recognizing that the son was lost but now found. 16 Similarly, Johnson
emphasizes the father’s extravagant gestures of acceptance, which include
a robe, ring, and feast, all initiated before the son has time to complete
his speech. 17 The father is in a hurry to see his son in his place as a
member of the family. For Plummer there is no need for the father to
ensure the son has the finest robe, a ring on his finger and sandals on
his feet. The father strives to help his son let go of his painful past and
recognize complete forgiveness by doing all he can. The Father knows
with his actions, he will help his son to heal completely. The best way to
express his intentions is with a party where everyone can see both the
father’s happiness and the son’s recovery of dignity. By doing this, nobody
would dare to say anything to the son, and they would have to respect
him as before. This is undoubtedly another effort by the father to protect
the dignity and physical and mental health of his son.

24 because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began. Gadenz highlights the transformation of the son, from death to life, is what Paul describes in Ephesians: “You were dead in your transgressions and sins… But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ” (Eph 2:1,4-5). Johnson emphasizes that the story of the “lost” and “found” son would have had significant meaning for early Christians who read it.18

25 Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. Our good Jesus has revealed to us the thoughts of the older son in the parable. One can envision the archetypal responsible older son who knows his duties and, despite his occasional desires to do otherwise, ultimately follows his father’s will with some lingering resentment. Plummer puts it this way: “Doing his duty, but in no loving spirit.”19 Upon returning from the field exhausted, hungry, and hot, he is taken aback by the sounds of music and revelry.

For parents of an estranged child is important to shift focus towards the other children, if they have them. Perhaps they have been putting most of their thoughts and energy towards the child who is often referred to as the ‘black sheep of the family,’ and as a result, unintentionally neglecting the other children. However, each of the children has their own unique needs and challenges, and each one deserves attention and care. Take some time to assess your priorities and ensure that you are giving each child the love and support they require to thrive. This does not mean ignoring the challenges faced by the ‘black sheep’ but rather finding a balance that benefits all of your children.

26 He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The older son lacks the courage or desire to go and find out what is going on by himself, so he calls one of the servants. Perhaps he does not feel welcome to join in the celebration without first taking a shower, or as we say in Mexico, ‘el apellido se le subió’ - the surname went to his head,

upsetting and robbing him of the festive mood. For parents with a child who has been struggling or going through a difficult time, it is important to remember their other children. They may need extra attention and care. While it is natural to focus more on the child who is experiencing challenges, neglecting the needs of the other children can lead to feelings of resentment and neglect.

27 The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. Johnson clarifies that the term “safe” in this context is used to indicate the younger brother’s good health status. 20 The fact that the younger brother has returned and is in good health are significant reasons for the father to start a celebration immediately, without waiting for the older son’s input or permission on how to proceed. The father’s joy at being reunited with his estranged son and the gratitude he feels for his son’s safe return are both reasons for him to express his happiness with a feast and celebration. The servant is not but expressing aloud what is going on, even though Johnson notices the subtle touch in the phrasing, “your father.” 21 Was it this small detail that caused the older son to explode in anger and refuse to enter the house? Gadenz notices that the “father came out to him as he had done with the younger son.” 22 According to Johnson, with this attitude the father expresses his love for the elder son, while allowing him to express his 23

Therefore, it’s essential to maintain a balance and ensure that each of the children receives the love, support, and attention they require. This may involve carving out some one-on-one time with each child, providing opportunities for them to pursue their interests and hobbies, or simply checking in with them regularly to see how they’re doing. By being attuned to the needs of all their children, parents can create a nurturing and supportive environment that helps everyone to thrive. In this way, when challenging times arise, family members are better equipped to

handle them and are more likely to welcome an estranged loved one back into the fold with open arms. By fostering a supportive and nurturing environment, family members can develop strong bonds and a sense of solidarity that allows them to weather difficult times together and celebrate each other’s triumphs. When a child leaves (the home or the faith), it is important not to assume they need more attention or care than the ones who stay with parents. The ones staying home may need even more help than the one away; for Johnson, this is the case with the older son.24 Although their needs may be different, it is important to recognize that everyone in the family is impacted by the absence of a loved one. The remaining family members may also feel hurt, saddened or challenged by the departure of their sibling and may require extra support during this time of tribulation.

29 He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. 30 But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’

Gadenz notes that while “the younger son felt he did not “deserve to be called” a son the older son ironically speaks to his father as if he were not a son but merely a servant. He never calls him “father” nor the younger son “brother.”25 Johnson translates the word “served you” here as “slaved you,” emphasizing its present tense and drawing attention to its Greek roots, which imply that the older son perceives himself as bound in servitude. This choice of translation underscores the profound bitterness he harbors as he recounts years of labor without even the gesture of a goat to feast with his friends, a stark contrast to the fattened calf slaughtered for the celebration. Additionally, the son’s desire to celebrate with his “friends” rather than with his father further illuminates his strained relationship with his family. Plummer notes here that the older son is exhibiting much the same spirit as his brother at the beginning of the story. He wants to have his father’s property so he may enjoy himself apart from the father.26 “This son feels lower than the hired hands. He sees

himself as a slave.” The older son is like the righteous Jews who do not “need repentance,”27 a position held by Plummer as well.28 Additionally, he notes this older son “supposed that he was being wronged because others were treated with generosity.”29 On top of that, the older brother cannot seem to refrain from accusing his brother of the most heinous sins. The older son accuses his younger brother of squandering the father’s wealth on prostitutes, even though the narrator and the younger son do not provide explicit details on how the money was spent. The older brother’s accusations are clearly fueled by a deep-seated resentment and frustration that have built up over time; “he is alienated even though he never left home!”30 Failing to process their emotions about the situation, siblings of an estranged child who remain at home may eventually reach a tipping point with their feelings. Over time, these pent-up feelings can build and erupt in unexpected ways, such as unscripted words or actions that may be fueled by the intense pressure of the circumstances. “The tragedy of the older son is not only that he has failed to recognize his constant position of privilege with his father, that all the time they were together, ‘they shared goods in common,’ but also that he is blind even now to the fact that his father extends to him the same constant care and concern as toward the prodigal son.”31 For family members, it is important to communicate openly and honestly with one another about their emotions and to seek support and guidance when needed. By fostering an environment of empathy and understanding, family members can work through their challenges together and emerge stronger for it.

31 He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. 32 But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’” Gadenz highlights the father’s effort to reassure the older son when he addresses him as “my son,” emphasizing that their lives are intimately connected.

29 Ibid, 379.
“The father also tries to persuade him that the return of the younger son must be celebrated as a divine necessity. This divine logic of grace rises above the jealous comparisons of the older son, inviting reconciliation and to share the joy. The father wants both sons to come to the feast.”\(^32\) Johnson notes the subtle correction of the father to the older son when he says, “your brother.”\(^33\) The father also desires to restore the relationship between the two brothers. Plummer observes that the older brother fails to recognize the joyful nature of the celebration taking it as a reward for the wrongful behavior.\(^34\) John T. Carroll concludes his commentary on Luke acknowledging how Jesus “welcome sinners yet has no desire to exclude the righteous. However, they have a decision to make,”\(^35\) which could cause significant pain for the parent if the righteous sibling chooses not to forgive and welcome the sinner.

Another important aspect is to pray together for the return of the estranged sibling. Praying together as a family is an essential aspect of dealing with an estranged sibling. The act of bringing this loved one before God in prayer and asking for His guidance and wisdom in navigating the situation brings so much peace to the family. Through prayer, the family can also find strength and comfort in their faith and gain a deeper understanding of God’s love and grace. Moreover, praying together can also help to foster a sense of unity among family members and promote open communication. It provides an opportunity for each family member to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns about the estranged sibling in a safe and supportive environment. In addition to praying together, seeking guidance from a trusted spiritual leader or counselor can contribute to the healing process. They can provide valuable insights and advice on how to navigate the situation and help the family to work through any underlying issues that may be contributing to the estrangement. In situations when a family is going through difficulties, it is good to approach the sacraments together as a family.

Both the Eucharist and Reconciliation are sacraments of healing and official channels through which one can receive God’s grace. Overall, through coming together in prayer and seeking guidance, families can approach the situation with a greater sense of peace, understanding, and hope for reconciliation. In this manner, the entire family will be ready to celebrate when the time comes to welcome back the runaway or the member who has fallen away from the faith into the household/Church.

In summary, this interpretation of the prodigal son narrative in Luke 15:11-32 provides invaluable insights for parents navigating the complexities of having a child who has strayed from the faith, alongside their other children. The overarching message of the Gospel offers hope, guidance, and trust in the compassionate and merciful nature of God. This parable offers solace and illumination to those grappling with familial discord and spiritual estrangement. Moreover, opens up ongoing grace and mercy that God extends to parents who endure the sorrow of a lost connection with their child. May this interpretation serve as a beacon of comfort and reassurance amidst the trials of parental grief, ultimately pointing towards the redemptive power of love and reconciliation found in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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