

The sons of God

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We will act like a lamp shedding light to the people around us by leading them in the right path and giving corrections to others with love when they err, instead of accusing and isolating them.

That day, too, he was returning home tired after toiling in the fields. As he approached his house, he heard the sound of music and dancing from his house. He realised that his father and others were jubilant over something. A servant informed him that, “Since your younger brother has come back safe and sound your father is celebrating by killing the fattest calf.” Listening to this he was enraged. In spite of defying father and squandering all the money with prostitutes, his return is being celebrated so grandly by killing the fattest calf. That elder brother was furious and refused to enter the house. He told his father in a complaining tone, “Listen, for all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.” Then father explained to him with love, “**Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found**” (Lk 15:25-32).

This man, the elder brother, whom we come across in the parable given in the gospel of Luke is not a very familiar figure to us because he is not the main character in the story, but his younger brother - the prodigal son. But we generally don't bother to get acquainted with this elder brother or try to get a glimpse of his behaviour because very often we behave in the same fashion as this elder brother; even though, we claim to be the children of God and try to convince others that we walk with the Lord obeying his commandments. This elder son had been quite obedient to the father in all matters. He had been slogging for him like a slave. He had never left the house without the permission of the father. Besides, he is now the sole inheritant of the father's property as the younger brother had already taken his share! In every way he deserved to be fully blessed by his father; but he had certain drawbacks.

TRUTH THAT GOES UNNOTICED

1. In spite of living with the father always he neither could understand the nature of his father nor follow the ways of the father. For example, the father was calm and affectionate, but this man was short-tempered and without love. To put it in the language of the father, in spite of having life, he lived like a dead person.

2. "I was always there with you." The reason for the satanic behaviour in him was that he did not recognise the strong presence of God with him. Life would have been of one filled with the anointment of God if he led his life realising the presence of God. Instead of joining his father in the celebrations his preference was to celebrate and rejoice with his friends. He wished to please his friends and get appreciation from them by throwing a party for them killing a fatted calf. We can see many who like to spend time with their friends finding pleasure in drinking and similar vices, instead of walking with the Lord.

3. It is true that the younger brother had left his father's house and gone astray, but the elder brother is not willing to receive or accept his own brother with love when he returned with repentance. In today's society, too, we see people who are envious of others and try to be stumbling block to their progress.

In our society there are many prodigal sons. To a certain extent, it may be our deeds, words and desires that are responsible for making them so. When they commit an error, instead of pointing it out to them with love, many of us may accuse them or isolate them or ridicule them in front of others. "I have become the laughing stock of all my people, the object of their taunt songs all day long" (Lam 3:14). Remember, the attitude of Jesus was not like this. Once a woman who was caught in adultery was brought to Jesus and many allegations were levelled against her. Jesus did not hurt her even with a look of accusation, but sat casting his glance down. That has caused her transformation. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and now do not sin again" (Jn 8:11). This is the attitude we should have. Whoever we are, we must keep away our selfishness and personal preferences and consider others superior to us. If their decisions and opinions are God-inspired, we will accept and lead a life accordingly. We will act like a lamp shedding light to the people around us by leading them in the right path and giving corrections to others with love when they err, instead of accusing and

isolating them. "I was always there with you." He led a life forgetting the loving presence of his father and that was the reason for his acquiring a satanic behaviour. Life will be filled with divine anointment if we lead a life recognising the presence of God in our lives. In the parable of the prodigal son, if the elder brother had advised him with love, or chided him with love when he asked for his share in anger to go away from home, probably he would not have become a prodigal son. It is wrong to keep quiet without responding when we come across evil and injustice. There are many elder brothers who are well off, talented and influential in our society who do not respond but support evil which will send many to the wrong path.

Let us not be responsible for making prodigal sons in the society. Every son of God must be able to rejoice and celebrate with God, keeping in mind the true nature of God the Father, and imbibing his qualities particularly His affection and merciful attitude. We can be a good elder brother who obeys the commandments of God and more over we can be a loving elder brother to others in the society. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Rom 8:14). We should be called the sons of God, not as prodigal sons or elder brothers.

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