

Daily Office Devotional, Thursday, November 12, 2020
Proper 27, the week of the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins

Today we celebrate the Feast of Charles Simeon. (See below.)

Daily Office Lectionary Readings

AM Psalm [83] or 23, 27; PM Psalm 85, 86
Joel 2:21-27; James 1:1-15; Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer
Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Gospel, Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

15:1Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.’

11 Then Jesus said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. 12The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. 13A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” 20So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” 22But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate. 25‘Now his elder son was in the

field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." 28Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29But he answered his father, "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. 30But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" 31Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32But 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."

David's Reflections

Jesus' meal ministry with outcasts and undesirables hovers in the background of today's Gospel, the well-known parable of the prodigal son. In the story, the father throws a banquet to celebrate the return of an erring son, but the older brother refuses to join the celebration. His murmuring outside the party corresponds to the complaining of the scrupulously pious who criticized Jesus' eating practices and would refuse to join such banquets.

In Jesus' story, the father shows us something about God's love. When the prodigal son returned home, the father ran to meet him. For a man to run in public in that culture would be shameful, but the father's love lifted him past any concern for appearance or propriety. The joyful feast celebrating the son's return corresponds to the joyful celebration of God and the hosts of heaven over the return of each person who has wandered away.

When the older son refused to join the banquet, the father went out to him as well. In both cases, the father initiated, the father actively reached out. Does this remind us that those pious rule-makers who shun the undesirables also fall within the circle of God's love and concern? Does it shock us that God seeks connection and relationship with them as well?

To beat up on Jesus' opponents has become a participator sport; we love to despise them. Yet, I find it helpful to remember that something of both sons lives within each of us. We have the wanderer, the prodigal, and the rebel within that pushes against God's love and says "To the far country." But, we also can find something of the dutiful, drudging, critical older son within as well.

What an image to carry through this day, the image of God's love making the first move, going out to include both the outcast and the religiously proud. And, that same love will be reaching out to those same disparate, conflicted aspects of our inner being, seeking to bring harmony and wholeness to our inner life.

Collect of the Day, Proper 27, the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 236)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Charles Simeon, teacher, promoter of mission work (died 13 Nov 1836) http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Charles_Simeon.htm

Collect of the Feast of Charles Simeon

Loving God, whose unerring wisdom and unbounded love order all things: Grant us in all things to see your hand; that, following the example and teaching of your servant Charles Simeon, we may walk with Christ in all simplicity and serve you with a quiet and contented mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Protection

O God, the life of all who live, the light of the faithful, the strength of those who labor, and the repose of the dead: We thank you for the blessings of the day that is past, and humbly ask for your protection through the coming night. Bring us in safety to the morning hours; through him who died and rose again for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (BCP, 124)

For the Unity of the Church

Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 255)

A Prayer for Light

Lighten our darkness, we beseech you, O Lord; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, Jesus Christ, Amen. (BCP, 111)

A Collect for Mission

O God of all the nations of the earth: Remember the multitudes who have been created in your image but have not known the redeeming work of our Savior Jesus Christ; and grant that, by the prayers and labors of your holy Church, they may be brought to know and worship you as you have been revealed in your Son; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, 257)