**Seeing Ourselves (in Luke 15:11-32)**

Read the text… deliberately and carefully.

I’ve long believed and often proclaimed, “One of the greatest powers of the human mind is the ability to deceive self.” Thus, I often have prayed- privately and publically, for *divine sight* that I/we might truly *see ourselves as God sees us.*

Parables are indeed “*earthly* stories” with “*heavenly* meanings” (*para-* to *lay* or *place* + *bole- beside* or *alongside*). They are inspired opportunities for us to “see” clearly the embodiment of spiritual truth and realities that might otherwise escape our notice, cf. Matt.13:9,13. *Parables* give us the chance to understand divine wisdom in human terms by using the *ordinary, common-place,* and *earthly* to reveal the *extraordinary, sublime,* and *heavenly.* Through these *insightful tales* (meant only in the sense that they are *made-up*) even we, the often *poorly sighted* and *hard of hearing,* are given the opportunity to clearly *hear* and *see* that which has previously eluded us; God, His will, and perhaps even ourselves…

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Prodigal****:*

v.12a- *demanding, selfish,* and *impatient.*

v.13, *naïve, self-assured, over-confident, squandering blessings*

vv.14-16, *needful, destitute, longing, attached to the despise, doing the reprehensible, alone, dead* though still *living* and *lost* (v.32)*.*

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Father:***

v.12b, *knowing* and *wanting better,* but *doing what is necessary* and *best* despite the *pain and hurt* that I know is coming for those whom I love, and thus, *resolute.*

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Fair-Weather Friends:***

vv.29,30, only “there” for what *I* get out it; *willing to use other people* for *my purposes, living short-sightedly only for today’s worldly pleasures.*

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Citizen of that distant country:***

vv.13,15-16, *willing to profit* and *benefit* not only from the *detestable,* from the *destitute* and *downtrodden, willing to provide scraps for others* only *when it benefits me.*

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Younger Son:***

vv.17-20a,21,22-24, *sensible, rational, logical, determined, humble,* properly *poor in spirit, resolute,* and *repentant; mercifully spared* and *graciously blessed, alive* from the *dead* and *found* from the *lost* (v.32).

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Father:***

vv.20b,22-24,27, *longing, looking, waiting, loving, merciful* and *gracious, forgiving, elated, fulfilled* and *whole, rejoicing* with *sin* but with *repentance.*

**Sometimes, I “see” myself in *the Elder Brother:***

vv.25-30, *chaffing under labors, brooding, angry, aloof, jealous, envious, self-centered, self-justifying, carnally-focused, short-sighted* and *tunnel-visioned, sharp-tongued, critical, judgmental,* and *unforgiving.*

**Conclusions:**

* **I believe and teach Jesus’ parables typically have *one primary point* to His *primary audience.* And that, therefore, when we “see” applications that He didn’t make (especially when inspiration provides them!), we usually wind up “seeing the trees” instead of “the forest.”**
* **This one may be the exception to that general rule…**
* **At least it seems to be so *for me.* I “see” myself in all the *wrong* places (the *prodigal, fair-weather friends, citizen of that country,* and *elder brother*) rather the right ones (the *father* and *younger son*).**
* **It is now up to you to determine *in whom* you “see” yourself in this divine mirror to the soul.**