

**LJCF June 17, 2018**  
**“Our Father - Who Leaves the Light On for You”**  
**Luke 15:11-32**  
**Pastor Jim Smith (aka Dr. JDS III)**

**The Set-up -** “This is the day that the Lord has made – let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:13-24). Each day (and every Sunday) is God-given, with unique opportunities as we’re *attentive* to His Word and Spirit. We begin in prayer...

Among our Lord’s life-giving commandments (=gracious boundaries) is “Honor your father and mother” (Exodus 20:12/Ephesians 6:2-4). America’s Fathers’ Day was sparked by a 1910 Washington State observance, inspired by a Spokane woman’s widower dad who’d raised six kids. Coincidentally, the following year, “Use a picture – it’s worth a thousand words” appeared in a NY newspaper. So how do you picture your father, or men who have shaped your life? **In what ways do you picture – and experience– God as Heavenly Father?** The NT parable of the “Prodigal Son” vividly portrays God as the Father who loves & redeems us, and our identity in His Family!

### **A Thousand Words - The Story of a Father’s Redemptive Love**

In Luke 15, Jesus’ “lost and found” **parables** utilize everyday things to convey rich spiritual truth. Lost Sheep & Lost Coins (keys?) motivate an eager search and happy recovery. How much more priceless is **God’s love & joy at the saving / healing / deliverance of a human life!** Verses 11-24 describe the random *Lost Son’s* journey of license> brokenness> reality check> repentance> homecoming. *God as Father* releases> waits actively > forgives> embraces> invites. In verses 25-32, the quite respectable *Older Brother* complies > produces > positions > explodes > accuses...

### **Two “Pictures” - Rembrandt Paints His Theology and Journey**

The Dutch artist, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), portrayed this biblical scene. In 1636, it’s an etching depicting the father publicly receiving a gargoyle-like son. No wonder. At this same time he paints “The Lost Son in a Brothel” – featuring *his* brash face and wife Saskia’s... Thirty years later, weathered by life’s trials, he offers the scene of a weary son finding the Father’s forgiveness and embrace - depicting two notably different hands. With “the light on,” the child has found home and peace.

### **This Moment – Finding Ourselves and “The Family” by God’s Grace**

Where do you see yourself in this parable, this life story, these pictures? In his book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (1992) Henri Nouwen describes coming to the Lord as wayward child, then being surprised at the latent resentments and anger he felt as an older brother – then seeing the opportunity to imitate God as loving Father (Eph. 5:1) through hospitality and forgiveness, embrace and celebration. How is Papa (“**Abba Father**” - Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) calling [to] you in these days? **Jesus** revealed His glory, being “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). We receive these gifts from above and, born again, “have our Father’s eyes!” (Amy Grant 19:79). Together we engage “Our Father’s world” in faith, hope & love!