

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

A FATHER'S GIFT

"But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." (Luke 15:22-23)

It is love's nature to give. We have seen love giving itself in rich affection. We must now see love bestowing its gifts.

This sermon reveals that there on the road the Father commands his servants to bring forth for the returning son a robe, a ring, and shoes. He then bids them prepare a royal feast for the one who was lost but is now found.



Rev. D. C. CLARK

Jesus described the joyous homecoming of every wayward person who comes back to God from the life of sin. It is one of the most encouraging and win-some facts we know about God. Many a prodigal has been turned homeward, merely by hearing of such a loving God whose gifts to the penitent are so lavish and free.

There are those who ask if Christian living has its rewards. These closing sentences of the parable answer such inquiries with a ringing "Yes". Man does not serve God for naught. There are blessings untold to the God-centered life, and these are never so in evidence as upon the occasion of Christian conversion. It is the bestowal of such gifts that we discuss in this sermon.

1. THE FIRST GIFT WAS THE BEST ROBE THE FATHER POSSESSED. This suggests that there are no second bests. Every one of us, regardless of who he might be, is entitled to and receives the best God has.

In that day, the robe was reserved for special feast occasions. The important guest wore the finest robe and sat at the place of honor. The boy had seen his father's guests so honored. He never dreamed that he would occupy this place. But now that the robe was being draped about his shoulders, he knew that he was being taken back into family and home.

We know "honor", for which the robe is a symbol, to be a grand word. It means "to give attention to, to dignify". More often than not such honor is given as a reward for outstanding achievement. We watch a leader of men, dressed in academic gown and hood, receive an honorary degree. Here humanity honors those who bring dignity to the race.

Measured in such ways, many of our fellows have achieved magnificence in this world, and have been crowned with honor. The Prodigal did not fit such a pattern. He had achieved nothing for the race. He had brought it only shame. It was in this light that the elder brother judged. He could not understand all the fanfare over one who rightly should be condemned.

We see at this point the difference between the elder brother and the father. The brother measured and judged the Prodigal by the world's standards. The father saw him through the eyes of grace and love. The brother condemned his tattered rags and sinful past. The father placed a robe of mercy around those garments, covering up his shame and sense of loss.

We know this to be the way of God's love with the sinner. It bestows honor where honor is not due. It provides the crimson robe of forgiveness to cover man's dark and sinful life.

2. WE KNOW THE GIFT OF A RING TO BE EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT. The ring means authority. In Jesus' day everyone, except the poorest man, wore some sort of ring. If it were a signet ring, it amounted to the same as the power of attorney. Its wearer could, by stamping its seal on parchment or wax, carry on business transactions. It was the ancient man's letter of credit.

We can imagine what the ring meant to the Prodigal. We wonder if it were the ring he wore earlier, the rights to which he had forfeited when he left home. We shall never know, but we



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AT OUR CHURCHES

BAPTIST

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. V. C. L. Coleman, 384-3131
1209 N. "E" St., Las Vegas

The 22nd anniversary of the Second Baptist Church Choir will be celebrated starting today through Sunday, June 21. Brother Jewel Scott is choir president.

PILGRIM REST BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. E. C. Kline, 382-7263
101 N. "A" St., Las Vegas

A special Father's Day program sponsored by the layman's department of the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church will be conducted during the 11 a.m. service this Sunday, June 21.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. I. W. Wilson, 382-2632
400 Adams Ave., Las Vegas

Dr. Jack O'Neal, executive secretary of the home mission board of the Southern Baptist Convention will be guest speaker at the 11 a.m. service this Sunday, June 21, at Bethel Baptist Church.

EVERGREEN BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. A. B. Carr
723 N. "B" St., Las Vegas

Rev. G. Carr of Tallauk, La., will deliver a series of sermons at the Evergreen Baptist Church, June 28-30.

PLEASANT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. L. Kemp, 642-5708
1189 Hassell St., Vegas Hts.

GREATER FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. P. S. Walker, 384-1248
Balzar St., Vegas Hts.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. M. Carroll
712 W. Owens Ave., Las Vegas

ST. JAMES BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. J. L. Simmons, 382-2748
311 Madison Ave., Las Vegas

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. A. J. Thompson, 642-4001.
1305 N. "E" St., Las Vegas

NEW JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. F. N. Addison
"D" & Jefferson Sts., Las Vegas

GREAT EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. C. L. Alexander
721 N. "C" St., Las Vegas

do hear the words of the father to the elder brother and know that they were for the younger, too. "All that I have is thine", said he. This meant that the younger son not only had a place of honor in the home; he now had a share in his father's wealth also. With the ring, he could draw upon his father's resources for all his needs.

It would astound any one of us if a wealthy man gave us his power of attorney and allowed us to draw an unlimited amount of funds from his vast reserves of wealth. We could not contain our elation. It is such a gift that God offers us. He is rich beyond all measure. He says to us, "All that I have is thine". It is ours to claim by faith. All we need is humility enough to receive it.

THE THIRD GIFT WAS THAT OF SHOES. Only servants were without shoes. The young lad had expected to become a hired servant, but with the shoes he knew he was still his father's son.

METHODIST
ZION METHODIST CHURCH
Rev. M. D. Bennett, 382-9900
911 N. "G" St., Las Vegas

CATHOLIC
ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH
Msgr. W. J. Devlin, 382-9953
"H" & Morgan Sts., Las Vegas

Msgr. Devlin calls attention to the change in services and confession times at St. James Catholic Church as noted below.

Sunday Mass--11 a.m. and 5 p.m.
Week Day Mass--7:30 p.m. each evening
Confession--Saturday 4 and 7:30 p.m.

CHURCH of GOD in CHRIST
UPPER ROOM C. of G. in C.
Bishop C. C. Cox, 385-1541
1117 N. "F" St., Las Vegas

POWERHOUSE C. of G. in C.
Supt. J. W. Logan, 382-6187
1216 Adams Ave., Las Vegas

A revival will be conducted by the Rev. Logan starting today and continuing through Sunday, June 21, at the Powerhouse Church of God in Christ.

LIGHTHOUSE C. of G. in C.
Eld. Willie Rawls, 384-5539
E. Sahara Ave., Fourmyle

PRAYER HOUSE C. of G. in C.
Eld. W. M. Shaw, 382-1743
Blankenship St., Vegas Hts.

MOST HIGH C. of G. in C.
Eld. J. Washington, 642-5675
Henderson

PROGRESSIVE C. of G. in C.
Eld. Jos. Prudhomme, 642-5556
1155 Lawry Ave., Vegas Hts.

(All Churches of God in Christ)

Tuesday 8 pm - - - - - Bible Band
Wednesday 8 pm - - - - - *Young People
Friday 8 pm - - - - - Consecration
Sunday 10 am - - - - - Sunday School
Sunday 12 m - - - - - Morning Service
Sunday 6:30 pm - - - - - YPW
Sunday 8 pm - - - - - Evening Worship

*Progressive - - - - - Inspirational

RENO--Rev. W. C. Webb has been called to the pastoral of the Second Baptist Church in Reno.

One of the most difficult truths for us to grasp is the difference between being a servant and a son in God's service.

Many of us have a relationship with God that rises no higher than servant obedience. We serve God out of fear alone. We find no illt or happiness in such a state. It is a happy day, therefore when we come to sense in our own hearts that we are not servants but sons. It means a change in our whole concept of religion. It also means a change from the drudgery of obedience to the joy of service.

4. THE LAST ACT ON THE FATHER'S PART WAS PROCLAIMING A FEAST. It was customary to take a calf from its mother and fatten it for some special occasion. Nothing was more special than this. "Kill the fatted calf," the father ordered!

Such a feast implies the joy of reunion between father and son. In a human family such

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