

Thought for the Week
15th September 2019
24th Sunday in Ordinary time

This week we have the story of the Prodigal Son or, alternatively, as Father Ellis called it - the story of the forgiving father.

I always find this very hard to take as most of my sympathies are with the son who remained behind and helped his father. However, we must think that each son, like us, has free will; both sons could have taken their inheritance and disappeared for years only to return, ashamed and hungry. We could argue that the stay-at-home son chose to be kinder to his father, but conversely he may have selfishly thought “now my brother has gone I am heir to all the rest.”

There is no denying that the younger son was feckless, selfish and unthinking. He left without a second thought for anyone else’s feelings. But be honest, we often do things without thinking of others.

The gospel is a message for everyone - selfish people, unkind people, greedy people, and maybe even wicked people! It also shows us unselfish, good, kind and caring people. Jesus was trying to say that everyone is flawed, but some overcome that flaw with God’s unfailing help and generosity. Our relationship with God is bound up with our relationship to each other.

I like to hope that the elder son had a change of heart when his brother returned, chastened and humbled; maybe they became friends again and were a joy to the father in his old age. Or maybe not.

Let us pray that our treatment of others may not be obscured by resentment, jealousy or anger and we may offer forgiveness to others freely and with God’s help.

A Parishioner