

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

1. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners and the sellers of fish for to hear Him.
2. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And there is a string whiff of fish hereabouts. And Nicodemaus did deny that he was responsible.
3. And He spake this parable unto them, saying, Worry ye not about the fish, for I shall do a mighty work with them a bit later. But first, we shall skip a few verses. And then He saith,
11. (b). A certain man had two sons. He also had five daughters but we needs not concern ourselves with them for they are not important to this story:
12. And the younger of the sons said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me, for I care not to wait until thy demise, for thou art healthy and strong and it will be many years yet. And the man talketh unto his wife about this request, and she being a loving mother and in a super-good mood for reasons we will not go into here, dear Theophilus, did suggest that all the children should receive their inheritance now. And after consulting with his financiers the man divided unto them his living.
13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, packed his bags, mounted his ass, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14. And when he had spent all on wine and food and truffles and fondant creams and rare eastern emollients there arose a mighty famine in that land; and having emptied his store cupboard and opened his last packet of stuffed dates, he began to be in want.
15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. And those listening to the tale did raise their eyebrows at this, and some did smirk and nudge their fellows, but the Pharisees tut-tutted so that Jesus did explain his phrasing. And the crowd did implore him to continue with his story, so he said, This man sent him into his fields to feed swine. And there was a sharp intake of breath amongst his hearers, for some gathered the socio-theological implications of this.
16. And Jesus said, The boy would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, even unboiled and without fats or sauces: and no man gave unto him. Not a sausage.
17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and wine on the table and figs and fried locusts, and clean towels in the bathroom, and I perish with hunger!
18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, let not my mother know of my misfortune, especially on this day of celebration of women. (For he had remembered.) I confess that I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants that I may eat and drink and wash my robes that are soiled and smelleth.
20. And he arose, and came to his father on foot, for he had sold his ass to a merchant as was alluded in a previous verse. But when he was yet a great way off, his father looked down the road, squinteth, and called for his lens. And when he had focussed he recognised him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and giving his head a loving slap, he kissed him.
21. And the son said unto him, Father, tell not my mother I am here. I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Plus I forgot to get a Mothering Sunday card.

22. But the father said to his servants, Bathe him, and then bring forth the best robe - the scented one with fine lace and padded shoulders - and put it on him; trim his nails and his nose hairs, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
23. And bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and take it unto the cook that it may be prepared with oils and herbs and that Egyptian garlic, and bake unleavened bread and roast some vegetables, and fill every jug with gravy, and let us eat, and be merry. Oh. And get him a card to sign for his mother. There's one on my desk.
24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. And his mother did hear the noise of celebration and did enter the room and did weep with relief and embrace her son even though he didn't hand her a posy of flowers.
25. Now their elder son was in the field scattering dung as was his bent, and in the distance he heard the sounds of merry-making: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing and rustic songs which are not recorded in this book.
26. And he called for his sisters but none came out as they had preened and applied powder and having sipped various wines in their chambers were attempting to negotiate the steps to the main room, so he summoned one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound, and thy mother is lain upon his breast weeping, and thy sisters have already drunk much wine and are displaying themselves.
28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him saying, Come in, you great lummock.
29. And he answering said to his father, Nay. And his father did ask Why not? And he replied, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, scattering dung to the four winds, and never worrying the animals; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. And sensing their disquiet Jesus explained that the kid the son desired was a young goat, and still there were sniggers.
30. And the eldest son continued, But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, lucky sod, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf and brought fine wines from thy cellars and spread numerous sweet puddings on the table. And displayed nuts of the finest.
31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me even though I have oft-times suggested that thou gettest an apartment of thine own, and all that I have is thine, for thou hast also received thine inheritance and yet hath chosen not to spend it.
32. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. And what a nice thing for mother also – it has made her day. And there were murmurings of approval from the listeners though some of the Pharisees did perceive a veiled criticism of their behaviour. And there was still a smell of fish.