

**Devotional Thoughts :: PASTOR YOURSELF: TAKE HEED UNTO YOURSELF...PT III**

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TEXT: LUKE 15:17;EPHESIANS 4:7; TITUS 2:11-13

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

A saint needs to be in absolute control of himself: no external influence of any kind should hijack his being. The import of being sober by the scripture confirm this. No circumstances should get a believer off his balance...he should be well-balance at all times! Sorrow or excitement must not undo his composed disposition in the Christ. The young man in our text seems to have traveled out of himself; he is no longer in charge of his life: actually he was lured from himself by the portion of his father's goods or estate that "falleth to..." him. This disengagement or detachment from his real being made him to spend his estate on riotous living and harlot.

So, the phrase, "And when he came to himself..." abundantly suggests that he was out of himself, out of his senses! He was not in control any more as far as the affairs of his life are concerned. His life was in the hand of something else. Where then was his life? Look at Luke 15:13

"And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living."

His father gave in to his demand by dividing his property between him and his elder brother. This act of his father is the beginning of this young man's problem. The wealth in his hand took over his life and suggested to him to take a journey into an unknown and far country...far from his homeland. The Bible says, he "gathered all together..." actually it was the 'all' (the property) that gathered or bundled him together and carried him far from home and his real self not the other way as the writer of Luke suggests.

Money carried him away into a far country! One thing about wealth is she has the capacity to carry a man from one place to another. Money can change a man's location, gives him a new appearance and select new class for him. She can carry a man far from his homeland and even from his real self.

We therefore surmise that this young man's life was not in his hand until something happened in vs 14.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want."

It was when his wealth left him and dump him amongst the stinking pigs that he actually came to himself. When wealth wants to dump a man, she does that in a very despicable place and time, with pigs! Man is more faithful to wealth than wealth is to him. Wealth is careless and is a truebreaker: she does not honour any covenant! She has wings...trust not in her, for her way is slippery. Put not your life in her hands!

But glory be to God, this abandonment is an answer to his father's prayer back home! Our runaway brothers and sisters would come back in answer to our prayers! Amen! Watch this: there are three main stages in the life of this young man: the first one is when he was with his father or before he asked for his portion of his father's estate. At this stage, he was just a son, enjoying the love of the father: potentially, he was an owner of an estate.

The second is when he got into the estate and became owner. Here, he left his father and his homeland! He turned his back on the love of his father, became independent and "fatherless." He has no father again, but he has his father's goods. He abandoned his father but ran away with his father's blessing. He seemed to be doing well until his father's goods or material blessing left him.

This brings us to the third stage: No father and no father's material blessing. Devoid of a father and the father's blessing

or material providence. This left him in a pig's company. At this juncture, he became a pastor to himself and preach a salvation message to himself...this sermon liberated him from amongst the pig. What is the contents of this sermon? To be continued.