

MADE IN THE PATTERN

NATHANIEL SWAAN

Hebrews 8:5 tells us, *"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."*

Many scriptures show that we are the living temple of God. What is the pattern for us? Scripture states that God created all things through Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 3:9, *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."*

Colossians 1:16-19, *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"* (See also John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 8:6).

I would like you to think about this question. Why would God have the one who was His beloved Son, and who made everything, sacrifice

himself to redeem his own creation? If creation had turned away from God, why not erase it and start over? The answer must be that this process will create sons and daughters of God. Then, what is this process that creates sons and daughters of God?

John 14:6 says, *"Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'"*

I believe that this passage is talking about more than just accepting Jesus Christ as our personal saviour. It is speaking about a pattern of living. A pattern presented to us by Jesus Christ, and the only pattern and way that will enable us to be in the presence of God. The apostle John is very explicit in 1 John 2:6, *"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."*

You cannot live this life by human effort, for Scripture states that no man can keep the law. No man can walk as Jesus walked. We, as Christians, must submit ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit. He will direct, guide and immerse us in Him. We will come to where we do not speak our own words or do our own works.

Romans 5:10 says, *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."*

He lives His life, His pattern, through our lives, as we walk in fellowship with Jesus, the light.

Romans 12:1 states, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

This is a joyful experience. We rest in the God that laid every day of our life out before we were formed in the womb. This is going with the flow; the flow of life.

Jesus states that man must leave his own nature behind to follow Him, in Luke 9:23-24, *“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”*

The apostle Paul, who repeatedly encourages the church to walk in the new life and put on the new man said of his own life in Galatians 2:20-21, *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”*

There is only one Christian value, from which all others flow. It is the cross. It is our cross. We are saved by grace through faith. It is the gift of God. God’s being and nature flow unto us through Jesus Christ. The only right response to grace is repentance from the natural man and his ways. We can embrace the new creation that we are in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:1-8 says, *“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as*

lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

Dolos, the Greek word translated as guile, means decoy, referring to any type of wile, deceit, manipulation, half-truth, etc. This list Peter gives refers to the many ways man uses to get his way, or accomplish his goals. Peter says as newborns, born again, let us feed on, absorb the living Word, and grow in the grace of Jesus Christ. God will lead us every day. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. He is both our pattern and the enablement to fit that pattern. Paul, in Philippians 3:17 states, *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”* Paul is not speaking about us following his natural nature, but rather his pattern and devotion to Christ, the pattern set before him and us.

We read in 1 John 3:2, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”*

The only way to become a son of God is to follow in the path of the firstborn. This takes trust in God. God tells us that if we lack faith, ask, and He will give it to us. The way of God is the opposite of the ways of man. We conquer by yielding, receive by giving, overcome by yielding, and live by dying. The cross is the only way to life. The path of Jesus Christ is the only way to sonship.

There is only one way that leads to life. Our calling is to forsake all and follow Christ. What a rest we will walk in when we can let go. God makes a way for us, as he did for Jesus. ✝



THE PRODIGAL SON

ANDY SNOKE

We are all familiar with the story of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. Though we have often read this story, it is a blessing to dive deeper into the richness of the meaning of the text and its implications for every human that has been born.

This story has always been referred to as the “Prodigal Son.” But in many ways, it could be called “The Loving Father.” The title “Father” is referenced no less than twelve times.

It is the story of a lost, unthankful, wasteful, and rebellious son, just

like you and I are. And it is a story of a loving, patient, faithful praying father who continued to love his son with all of his heart. We know a Father like this, our heavenly Father, who seeks that which is lost and never gives up on us despite our many failures.

There has been much disagreement as to what the term “prodigal” in this parable really means. Many translations infer that “prodigal” means reckless behavior, and it does. Some believe the word “prodigal” means wayward, or rebellious, and certainly these words apply to this son (and to us).

The “prodigal,” in this text, has a mixed, somewhat confusing, meaning. I will quote from the writer David Jeremiah, “The noun actually means a recklessly extravagant spendthrift. While the younger son behaved this way, so did the father: he gave his sons everything they asked for and showered them with gifts. God is in a sense a ‘prodigal Father,’ spending His love extravagantly on his children from start to finish.”

The unrighteous man or woman, he/she that does not know the love and protection of the father, spends his/her life working for another master as a hired servant, much as the prodigal son did.

All the while, family members, and the Saviour of our soul, long remember their lost ones in prayer before God, praying that they would come home.

When the prodigal left his home, his father, his land, and his protection and went to the far country, he soon spent all that he had and longed to eat the very food that he was feeding the pigs. As he thought of his father at home, he realized that his father’s servants were fed better and treated better than he was in this foreign land.

The prodigal son may have said to himself, “I made a big mistake, and I will repent and go home. When I see my father, I will tell him the truth; I am no longer worthy to be called his son. I wasted my life. I will beg him for the privilege of just being his hired servant.”

When a man or woman comes to Christ, they follow similar steps. Just as the prodigal, we must recognize and acknowledge that we are sinners, repent (change our direction), confess that nothing of ourselves is of value, and admit that we have made many mistakes. Then we repent, go home and come to the Father.

Paul said it like this, “*That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Romans 10:9-10, NKJV).

The prodigal returned to his father and said, “*I am no longer worthy to be your son, treat me like one of your hired servants.*”

Let’s pause a moment and think about what that statement meant: a “*hired servant.*”

In Jewish households of that day there were three levels of servants.

Bondservants:

Bondservants were almost like family. They ate with the family, could conduct business on behalf of the family and were included in many family affairs.

Bondservants - Hired a Second Class of Servants:

These servants carried out the actual work of the home and of the bondservants. They were loosely affiliated with the family and estate owner.

Hired Servants:

This class of servants is what might be called today a “day worker” or “per diem” worker. They were paid by the day for their labor, but had no connection or affiliation with the family. They could be hired and fired at will.

“*Treat me like a hired servant,*” the prodigal son said. He acknowledged his sins and did not want to humiliate his father anymore as a member of his family, but wanted the privilege of working as a day laborer, so that he might be fed for a day. How humbling to come to this point in your life. It would have been too bold of a statement for the prodigal to ask his father to allow him to be part of his family again.

The loving father had other plans for the son. Your Father, my Father, has plans for us. When we are “willing to be a servant,” God is willing to make us sons.

John 1:11-12 (KJV), “*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*”

When the son made his long journey of travel and repentance back to his father and home, the father saw him a long way off and ran to him, embraced him and kissed him. This speaks to us that his loving father must have been looking at the horizon every day, praying and hoping that his son would return. The son had rehearsed his speech for his father. It sounds as if the father had also rehearsed his speech as well.

I can almost hear the father of the prodigal praying to God every night and day. It may have gone something like this:

“Dear Lord, I have not been the best father to my sons, please forgive me and compensate for my failures. I pray for my lost son, I pray that you bring him home. I hold no grudge for his wasteful living. I only want him home, in my house, in my care. If you return him, dear Lord, I will be the best father I can be. There will be no remembrance of my son’s sins between us. It will be a new start. Dear Lord, please, let my prayer be heard.”

I can also hear in my spirit our Heavenly Father speaking to us, saying, “Come home. I have a place for you. All is forgiven because of the work of Jesus on the cross. Come home. Be my Son. The door is open for you.”

“*And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*”

“*But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry*” (Luke 15:20-24, NKJV).

What was the significance of placing a ring on his son’s finger, and sandals on his feet? It speaks of setting his son back in full authority as a son in his father’s household. All sins were forgiven, and he was completely restored.

Permit me to once again quote from Dr. David Jeremiah in some of his notes as follows:

“The ring in a Jewish estate was a very important piece of jewelry, it adorned the hand of an important son and was used for transacting business. When the owner finalized a transaction, the etched ring would be embedded in a wax seal at the bottom of the document to make it official. This father reinstated his son as heir and gave him authority. While slaves in Jewish households did not wear shoes, no one who

belonged to the family ever went without them. In giving this young man a pair of shoes, the father reinforced the youth's sonship rather than his servanthood.

It is a great mystery that Jesus calls us to be both a servant and a Son with full privileges of His family just as this prodigal son was.

How sad to be fatherless in a far country when we have a heavenly Father calling us, who paid the way for our salvation and redemption through the blood of Jesus.

If, as a reader, you feel that you are in a state of existence far from the comfort of God's home, you can come home right now. The door is open; the Father is waiting to restore you, waiting to place a family ring on your finger, waiting to place the shoes of a son on your feet, waiting for you to take the step. Now is the time.

Please take a moment and reflect on the lyrics of this beautiful song, written in 1880 by Will Thomson:

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
see, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain:
Come home, come home;
you who are weary come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me?

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
passing from you and from me;
shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming,
coming for you and for me.

O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me.


For reference, I will copy the text of the parable below:

The Parable of the Lost Son

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:11-24, NKJV). 

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