



“So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.”

-Luke 15:20–24

DEVOTIONAL

The prodigal's father does not wait at the door with a clipboard. He does not demand a full explanation before offering a hug. He runs. He sees his child "while he was still far off," and he runs.

Mercy begins earlier than we think. Before the apology is finished. Before the cleanup is complete. It starts in God's heart, not in our performance, and it moves toward us before we have figured out what to say.

Which makes me sit with some things. Where have I made mercy conditional, for others or for myself? Where has comparison quietly shaped my faith, like I am only okay if I am doing better than someone else? What would it feel like to live from refuge instead of ranking?

Mercy is not pretending harm didn't happen. It's not the same as enabling. But it is the refusal to let shame be the loudest voice in the room. It is the choice to keep the door open to transformation, even when transformation is slow and messy and not yet finished.

God's mercy is not scarce. It is not a prize for the most impressive or the most put-together. It is a homecoming gift. And when we actually receive it, something shifts. We start to become people who can offer it, too.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Write one sentence you need to hear from God like, "*You can come home.*" Put it somewhere you will see it today.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of welcome, I have been hard on myself and suspicious of others. Start mercy in me again. Teach me to come home to You, and to make room for others to come home, too. Amen.





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