

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"An outside view of an inner conflict" 3/13/24

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful.

"All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. (1 Cor 6:12)

He'd gone and done it. It had been his great idea. See the world, he'd thought. Learn about other places and cultures. He wanted to live while he was young, have some grand experiences. Enjoy life in the fast lane. What had he thought he was doing? "Dad, give me my inheritance now. Sell off some land, cash in some stocks, so I can go enjoy my life. It probably sounded like he'd wanted his dad to die. It wasn't that, really, he just wanted out of Dodge. That wasn't wrong, was it?

Jeesh, now it did sound selfish, and obviously hadn't been well thought out, but what to do? It had been easier to spend money than he thought it would be. There was so much. It would have been ok if it had just been him, but pretty soon, Hiram and Joshua were counting on him to pay for their fun, then Josiah and Samuel showed up, with nothing. He was paying rent, buying food and drinks when they went out. Pretty soon he felt like the Pied Piper leading his merry band. Then the money ran out, and not a one of them were concerned about where his next meal was coming from.

Now, here he sat in the middle of reality, taking an outside view of his inner conflict. Here he was, working for old McDonald feeding pigs, eating their slop, how far we have fallen. "Where do I go from here?" he thought. This was not part of the grand scheme he'd laid out. What are the chances dad'd take him back, even as a servant? He had experience.

We've all wanted to enjoy life, to venture into another world, do something we could brag about, do things which would impress others. Some adventures work out for us, some go sideways. Journeys lead us to a different place, some are worth the trip, some just stink.

When we take an outside view of our inner conflicts, we look at our journey and realize we always learn something. Something about the world, things about other people, and things about ourselves. We realize we will learn lessons which make us or break us. We learn the importance of having good shoes, of holding on to wise foundational teachings.

We remember we can return to God, even after a fateful journey. Even after we've made a mess of the outing, we learn, even though it was lawful to take this journey, it wasn't helpful. Even now, we can choose to return to God, remembering His love is never ending. He is waiting for our return. He will welcome us home.

Please pray with me:

God of mercy and forgiveness, thank You we can return to You, even after this journey, even after making disastrous decisions and You love us and will forgive us. You will welcome us home. Thank You for the peace this knowledge gives to us as we take an outside view of our inner conflicts.

Amen.