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Why the prodigal son fed pigs?



There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate.” So, the father divided his property between them.

Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and, there, squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

Luke 15: 11-15
Why does the Holy Scripture remind us of pigs and not mention other details in the life of the prodigal son that may have been more important? Because, in this way, the Holy Scripture shows us the whole process of drowning in sin:

Man departs from God, represented in the parable by the father from whom the prodigal son separates. Then, the son becomes attracted to and fades into the centers of pseudo-pleasure he finds far from God, wasting his wealth of God’s

grace. After spending all the grace, his soul begins to starve and is sent to guard the pigs. Why pigs?

The pig's properties: Why the prodigal son fed pigs?
Because the pig has several properties that make it very suitable for this parable:

- The pig, due to its anatomy, can never look up but only toward the ground.
- The pig always likes dirt. Even if you wash and clean the pig again, it returns to the dirt from which it came.
- The pig does not eat as much as it needs but as much as it can, only for the pleasure of eating
- The pig even eats its own feces. This is very disgraceful and, because of this, people tend to throw stones at the moment they see pigs such an act. But the pig, however, faces the stones and, by nodding, continues to try to eat its feces. People say that, at this point, the pig shouts "Only this one, only this one! It is hot!"

This is the state to which sin brings us: the state of the pig, a state in which we never imagined we would reach before committing sin—and yet it happens.

We say, "I will never get this far! I will never fall that low" And yet, we get there.

The key is not to demand our wealth—if it means parting from God.

Our power is to be found in God Himself—nothing lower and nothing else.

Based on Saint Luke 15: 11-15, Elder Joseph of Vatopedi

A glimpse from a footpath near Vatopedi, Mount Athos after a heavy rain

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