

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

About the Future Second Week of Lent Saturday, March 7, 2015, 8:15 AM
Mi 7:14-15, 18-20; **Lk 15:1-3, 11-32** (Sts. Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs) (Is it about the Lord or about the Law?)

We have to keep in mind **to whom Jesus is addressing this story**, and it is **the Pharisees and the scribes**; and he is addressing it to them because **they are complaining about his welcoming sinners and eating with them**. Of course for Jews to eat with someone is to do something intimate. A meal is a very intimate sort of context. You don't eat with people with whom you don't have a covenant relationship. An orthodox Jew will not eat with a gentile. Not only do they not eat non-kosher food but they don't eat with non-kosher people. So this is the background of the story.

Jesus is of course breaking all the rules, but he is trying to explain why. He has already said, "The healthy don't need a doctor, but the sick do." He has already said that. That's not enough now because what he is really getting at is how **the leaders of the religion of Israel should be with him welcoming these people**. That's his point. Not only should you not be complaining, you should be rejoicing. **These people are coming back to the Lord**. But their problem was they didn't see it, that these people were coming back to the Lord; they were simply observing they weren't following the Law—big difference. **Is it about the Lord or about the Law?** Is it about God or is it about structure?

For Jesus it was about God, It was about the Lord. It was about the heart of the Father. It was about welcoming people and embracing them, not about their life. It wasn't about what they were doing. It wasn't about who they had been, but **it's now about who they are going to become. It's not about the past. It's about the future**. But not for the Pharisees or the scribes. It couldn't be. They could not open their hearts to the future. They could not believe in **something totally new and radically different from what they believed in**. Therein lies the reason for this story.