

We all have a creational, natural sense to belong. Belonging –to have security, support, joined to another or family or group of friends that defines your identity. That you belong. One of many sad ironies in our modern world, although people can connected to others more than ever, never has so many people live in loneliness, isolation, depression, and mental afflictions. We all have a desperate need to be loved, to belong.

Satan will press hard, **seeking one to devour**. Temptations, instead of belonging in a marriage, there's someone else who will meet my needs, listen better, care for me better. Instead of belonging in the family, you are better off on your own without the advice of backward parents. Satan and his minions in the world work tirelessly, 24/7, your adversaries never takes a day off as they work to destroy where you belong -in your marriage, in your family, in the Church. What's the harm in a little conversation with another women, what's the harm in clicking on an image, or respond to a message, what's the harm in missing church for awhile. We all are think that some sins, our pet sins, a grudge, a little immoral pleasures, even being so busy to not have time doing what you should, wandering from where you belong -are harmless, that the devil is tame, not **a roaring lion seeking someone to devour**.

Spiritual warfare is simply the daily life of the Christian, a repentant life, dwelling in His Word amid struggles to live as His child, of setting one's will to do better, asking God for forgiveness and help. Satan and his demons are always prowling about, strategizing, laying traps. Their goal, to move us to fear, love, and trust -in us and things to satisfy our longings, other than God.

Thus St. Peter admonishes you: **humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Cast your cares upon Him. Be sober. Be vigilant. Resist the devil and his lies. Nothing has befallen you that is not common to man. The same sufferings, the same temptations, are experienced by your brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.** So, yes, you've been stupid, been wasteful and selfish, craven and bitter. You don't deserve God's love -but He gives it anyway. You aren't worth what He paid -but He paid it anyway and even gives all the inheritance to you. So repent and believe. God has called you through the waters of Holy Baptism, your life is not your own, you belong to Him.

The parable. Tax collectors, sinners drew near to Jesus. The Pharisees and the scribes complained, **This Man receives sinners and eats with**

them. For Jesus seeks the lost. He has come to save the unsavory. All are lost because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but that doesn't stop Christ from seeking them and offering them forgiveness. God does find, His sons mingling with pigs, covered in mud. He finds us starving and desperate for the worthless pods that Satan feeds to his demons. He comes promising that He will take all the abuse and punishment for us. He welcomes sinners home as we belong in His family, belong to Him. The father's statement, **Your brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found.** The parable is the essence of faith: Our Father's grace. He has compassion. He forgives trespasses in the sacrifice of His Son, that you unworthy children are received and feast.

You belong in Your Father's house. Like the older brother, being faithful, responsible, your duty. You properly come here. We aren't wasting our lives and our Father's goods with prostitutes. We're striving to be faithful to God's Word and promises. In a similar way, we are tempted to look at the sad, excessive lives of rich and famous and be jealous of their wealth, luxuries, and fame and we barely notice how sad and unhappy they are. Repent. This is simply lust for things that don't satisfy. Be jealous of no man. Stop your sinful pride and longings for things that robs you from rejoicing with your brothers and sisters in the things of your Father.

The son sinfully did not see how he belongs with his father, it took hard life's lessons, hurting parents, oh how some of you have struggled. Your Father, never gives up hope for our wayward adult children or loved ones. Pray, cling to the central reality of Christianity that Christ receives and eats with sinners, eager to welcome back and fully forgive the repentant. Hand those you love over to God in prayer. He loves them more than you do.

Casting all your anxieties upon Him, for He cares for you.

You belong in a family served by His faithful Shepherds. You belong where His truth is taught in doctrinal purity and the Sacraments administered rightly according to Scripture. You belong where Jesus, **This Man receives sinners**, the failures, the broken, the weak, the hurting, you prodigal children, sinners all, **and eats with them.** You belong (as Kyla) as He baptizes, make you His child, He makes holy. You belong in unending communion with the Father, in the courts of your Father's house. You belong in a Kingdom without end. You belong here. For You belong to Him.