

The Park Road Pulpit  
*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
Russ and Amy Jacks Dean, Pastors

***Meeting You Again***  
*Isaiah 30.15; Luke 15.11-24*  
Amy, Russ, Jackson, and Bennett Dean, August 30, 2009<sup>1</sup>



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brilliant rainbow following that storm. And it was interesting to observe how other people see. For example, we were walking through some farmlands on the Camino when Mr. Tony, our blind friend, said suddenly, “They’re bailing hay to our left.” We stopped, looked, and finally we saw in a distance a farmer bailing hay. Who really sees everything? Only God sees everything.

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Our cities do not encourage pedestrian traffic. (Could you walk to your grocery store for this week’s needs, even if you wanted to?) Our diets of fast food, and faster fat, are hardly designed for walking feet. And our lifestyles are, on the one hand, too sedentary – we couldn’t unglue from the TV, the Wii, or the computer screen if we tried, and on the other hand, they are too frantic – walk? You must be kidding! I’m late... time to fly!

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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

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And that is home.

When the Deans left here three months ago, we said, explicitly, that, like all pilgrims, we were setting out on our travels, not just for three exotic destinations, but in the hopes that along the way, step by step, we might find God. And we will testify to you that we did just that. But true pilgrimages are always filled with unexpected finds. In reading again the prodigal’s story I’ve found one more truth. It is this: as exciting as were our travels, as much as we did find God in the experience we have known, God will be most known to us, most evident, right here. In your welcome. Right here in this place we have come to call home.

Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

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*Isaiah 30.15; Luke 15.11-24*  
Amy, Russ, Jackson, and Bennett Dean, August 30, 2009<sup>1</sup>



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brilliant rainbow following that storm. And it was interesting to observe how other people see. For example, we were walking through some farmlands on the Camino when Mr. Tony, our blind friend, said suddenly, “They’re bailing hay to our left.” We stopped, looked, and finally we saw in a distance a farmer bailing hay. Who really sees everything? Only God sees everything.

We lay down on our sleeping bags one night by the Colorado River (with no tent, which Mom did NOT like) and looked up at the stars (and the bats, which mom did NOT like!) and thought – WOW – now that’s something to see. I thought about the fact that in Charlotte you cannot see THIS. And then to add to beauty of that moment, Dad read from Psalm 8: “*O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth . . . When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them?*” And in that moment I thought: most people look; some people see, but only God sees everything.

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Our cities do not encourage pedestrian traffic. (Could you walk to your grocery store for this week’s needs, even if you wanted to?) Our diets of fast food, and faster fat, are hardly designed for walking feet. And our lifestyles are, on the one hand, too sedentary – we couldn’t unglue from the TV, the Wii, or the computer screen if we tried, and on the other hand, they are too frantic – walk? You must be kidding! I’m late... time to fly!

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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

broken-hearted patriarch, who harbors his grudges, or who acts in so-called “tough love” to let us learn our lessons. Hardly. God is the warmth of an open-armed reception. A hearty “Welcome Home!” A celebration to beat all celebrations – especially when we deserve it not at all. God is found, where grace is offered.

And that is home.

When the Deans left here three months ago, we said, explicitly, that, like all pilgrims, we were setting out on our travels, not just for three exotic destinations, but in the hopes that along the way, step by step, we might find God. And we will testify to you that we did just that. But true pilgrimages are always filled with unexpected finds. In reading again the prodigal’s story I’ve found one more truth. It is this: as exciting as were our travels, as much as we did find God in the experience we have known, God will be most known to us, most evident, right here. In your welcome. Right here in this place we have come to call home.

Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

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*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
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Amy, Russ, Jackson, and Bennett Dean, August 30, 2009<sup>1</sup>



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brilliant rainbow following that storm. And it was interesting to observe how other people see. For example, we were walking through some farmlands on the Camino when Mr. Tony, our blind friend, said suddenly, “They’re bailing hay to our left.” We stopped, looked, and finally we saw in a distance a farmer bailing hay. Who really sees everything? Only God sees everything.

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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

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Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

The Park Road Pulpit  
*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

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When the Deans left here three months ago, we said, explicitly, that, like all pilgrims, we were setting out on our travels, not just for three exotic destinations, but in the hopes that along the way, step by step, we might find God. And we will testify to you that we did just that. But true pilgrimages are always filled with unexpected finds. In reading again the prodigal’s story I’ve found one more truth. It is this: as exciting as were our travels, as much as we did find God in the experience we have known, God will be most known to us, most evident, right here. In your welcome. Right here in this place we have come to call home.

Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

The Park Road Pulpit  
*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
Russ and Amy Jacks Dean, Pastors

***Meeting You Again***  
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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

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When the Deans left here three months ago, we said, explicitly, that, like all pilgrims, we were setting out on our travels, not just for three exotic destinations, but in the hopes that along the way, step by step, we might find God. And we will testify to you that we did just that. But true pilgrimages are always filled with unexpected finds. In reading again the prodigal’s story I’ve found one more truth. It is this: as exciting as were our travels, as much as we did find God in the experience we have known, God will be most known to us, most evident, right here. In your welcome. Right here in this place we have come to call home.

Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

The Park Road Pulpit  
*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
Russ and Amy Jacks Dean, Pastors

***Meeting You Again***  
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Amy, Russ, Jackson, and Bennett Dean, August 30, 2009<sup>1</sup>



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Put yourself in the boy's shoes, walk a mile in his sandals, for just a moment. Imagine what you are thinking with every step. Will my father take me in? He shouldn't. Will he turn me away? Tell me he's forgotten my name, cut all my pictures out of the family photos? That's what he should do. But Jesus said that home is where they take you in even when you don't deserve it. That gift of grace keeps coming up in Jesus' teaching.

Even when they don't have to!

The boy went away, with no obvious intention to return. But isn't home, really, our only destination? No matter where we go, or why, no trip, whether pilgrimage or prodigal proclamation can ever be complete without returning, and in some way claiming home as our own, receiving the grace it has to offer. The cathedral of Santiago de Compostella was the most visible of our "destinations." But the destination was really Santiago... de Charlotte – because, in truth, only now that we are back with you can we begin to know what it meant to go there. To be there. To have walked, together, in that setting. To have found what we were looking for, and more. To have experienced God in the journey. Anyone who wanders without returning... makes an incomplete journey. We all must reckon with who we are, where we've come from, why we left in the first place. We will never rest until we've come home.

I suppose Jesus told his story for a lot of reasons, to convey all the truth that has been found in it. But his story reveals to us the very nature of God. God is not a father who could scratch our names from the family tree – no matter where we've been. Not the hard-hearted, or

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And that is home.

When the Deans left here three months ago, we said, explicitly, that, like all pilgrims, we were setting out on our travels, not just for three exotic destinations, but in the hopes that along the way, step by step, we might find God. And we will testify to you that we did just that. But true pilgrimages are always filled with unexpected finds. In reading again the prodigal’s story I’ve found one more truth. It is this: as exciting as were our travels, as much as we did find God in the experience we have known, God will be most known to us, most evident, right here. In your welcome. Right here in this place we have come to call home.

Thank you for sending us out. With your blessing. Thank you for welcoming us home. With your open arms. We can’t wait to meet you, again. In doing so, you will show us God.

May it be so!

The Park Road Pulpit  
*Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church*  
Russ and Amy Jacks Dean, Pastors

***Meeting You Again***  
*Isaiah 30.15; Luke 15.11-24*  
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