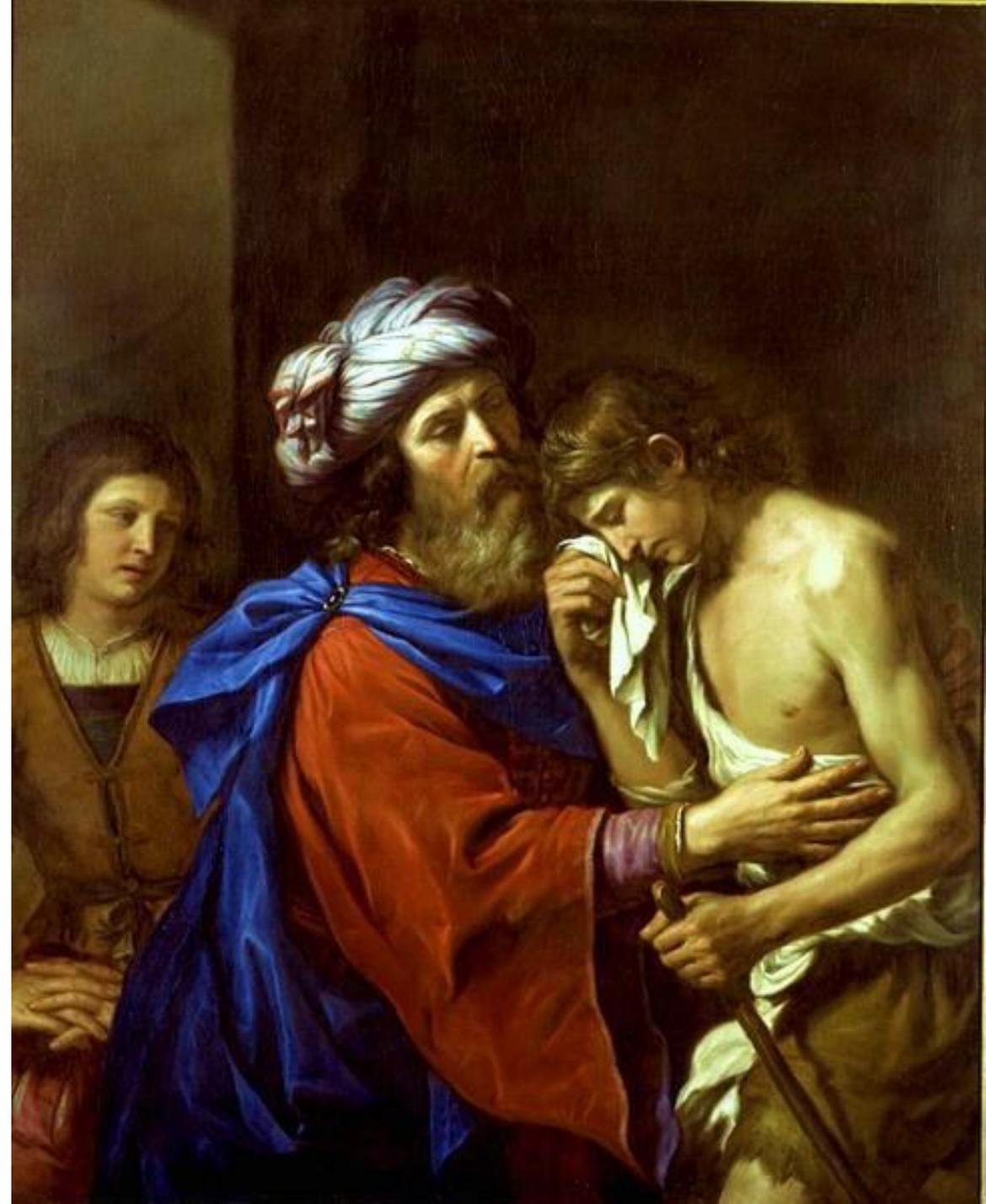


## Theme: Lent 4 ... Lost & Found

*My wife gets cross with me when I say I cannot find something like the salt to put on my chips. I stand there looking into the cupboard staring at all the condiments in search of the illusive item. Then I call out again that I still can't see it. This is met with more precise instructions like 'It's behind the pepper grinder' ... but I still can't see it. And my call of despair goes out again to her. My wife appears and moves the pepper grinder to reveal the salt cellar and utters the words, 'You had to move things!'*

*And so as we journey through Lent, this week sees us focus on the theme 'Lost and Found'. The parable of the prodigal Son teaches us that it is not enough just to want to be found (or to want to find something). You actually have to be proactive and do something. In the same way that he (the lost Son) makes the decision to ask for forgiveness from God, so we too, during this time of Lent, need to be proactive in asking God for forgiveness. Through His infinite mercy all will be forgiven, we just have to ask.*

[Mr Doust]



### Scripture:

Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided the property between his two sons. Then the younger son gathered up all that was his and left. He travelled far away to another country. There he wasted all his money in foolish living. Soon after that, the land became very dry, and there was no rain. There was not enough food to eat anywhere in the country. The son was hungry and needed money. So he got a job with one of the citizens there. The man sent the son into the fields to feed pigs. The son was so hungry that he was willing to eat the food the pigs were eating. The son realized that he had been very foolish. He thought, 'All of my father's servants have plenty of food. But I am here, almost dying with hunger. I will leave and return to my father. I'll say to him: Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am not good enough to be called your son. But let me be like one of your servants.' So the son left and went to his father.

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. He felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him, and hugged and kissed him. The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am not good enough to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get our fat calf and kill it. My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!' So they began to celebrate.

"The older son was in the field. He heard the sound of music and dancing. So he called to one of the servants and asked, 'What does all this mean?' The servant said, 'Your brother has come back. Your father killed the fat calf to eat because your brother came home safely!' The older son was angry and would not go in to the feast. So his father went out and begged him to come in. The son said to his father, 'I have served you like a slave for many years! But you never even killed a young goat for me to have a feast with my friends. But your other son has wasted all your money and you kill the fat calf for him!' The father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours. We had to celebrate and be happy because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found.'"

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
You are the lamb of God;  
you take away the sins of the world.  
Through the grace of the Holy Spirit  
restore me to friendship with your Father,  
cleanse me from every stain of sin  
in the blood you shed for me,  
and raise me to new life for the glory of your name.  
Amen.

