

The Prodigal Son Explains Why Only Nixon Could Go to China.

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I have always hated the story of the prodigal son. I was a pretty good kid, I didn't smoke. I didn't drink. I didn't get anyone pregnant. I didn't stay out all night. I did not rape, pillage nor plunder. I was never arrested. So I could easily understand how the prodigal son's poor brother felt when dad threw the big party for his wayward brother.

While I do embrace the concept of forgiveness, clearly the main message of the story, I think we may have taken the wrong message from this parable and much to our detriment.

If you ever watched an episode of VH1's Behind the Music you know that it seems as if just about every famous musician had to play the role of prodigal son and go off the deep end before reforming their lives and returning to fame, clean and sober (if they survived the process), much to the acclaim of their fans. Meanwhile, similarly talented musicians who have always been clean and sober seemingly can never enjoy this type of redemptive adulation. No street cred.

I see this same theme in politics. For me this theme is emblazoned by the famous Klingon quote: "Only Nixon could go to China." Why? Only Nixon supposedly had the credibility to go to China because he had such strong anti-communist credentials. All of those pussy liberals had no credibility. They could go to China if they wanted to, but they would only be proving that they were commie sympathizers. Only Nixon could go to China. He had street cred.

Today, we are told that only Bush can get us out of Iraq. All those who said that invading Iraq was a bad idea well before the beginning of "shock and awe" (i.e. liberals) cannot be trusted. They just hate the president, hate our troops and even hate America itself. Even as more and more conservative Republicans turn against the war they just prove that they, too, hate America. Only a real Neo-Con can get us out of Iraq without destroying America...

So what is the real message of the Prodigal Son? The message seems to be that people who get the correct answer the first time are not to be trusted. Only those who screw up over and over and again - and survive - can be trusted to lead us. Only those with street cred are fit to lead us. What an absurd idea!

This entire concept that only those who earn a diploma from the school of hard knocks are fit to lead or worthy of praise seems self destructive. This concept demeans those who possess the foresight to see the consequences of their actions BEFORE acting. They simply cannot be trusted. But why? Because they got the right answer the first time?

I see this as a part of the right's war on reason and the science. A belief in science and reason makes it harder for the religious right and the NeoCons from selling us more snake oil.

We non-prodigal sons and daughters need to speak up and act.