



The Parable of the Unhappy Pig

Part One

Once upon a time, there lived a Farmer who owned many kinds of animals, and he loved them all equally. It didn't matter how useful they were to him or how beautiful they looked, he enjoyed spending time with each one. When he fed them, he would always join them in their field or stall or pen, to talk to them, stroke them, brush them, pat them and play with them. By the end of the day, he smelled just like them and he didn't even mind.

But his Wife did. "Why?" she exclaimed, pinching her nose. "The house is clean — let's keep it that way. Please go take a shower!"

The Farmer loved his Wife, so her reaction did not offend him. He washed off the farm dirt and animal smells without a moment's hesitation. Then he gave her his attention all evening, talking to her, stroking her emotional needs, brushing her hair, patting her on the back for the work she had accomplished, and playing her favorite games.

One evening the Farmer said to his Wife as they relaxed by the fire, "Today, all the farm animals told me how nice you've been to them."

The Wife smiled. "Yes, I try to love them as you love them."

"But there is one animal who is unhappy with you," the Farmer said.

"Which one?" asked the Wife, genuinely concerned.

"The Pig."

"Oh, the Pig." The Wife nodded knowingly.



The Pig said you only stop by long enough to say hello and you never play with him in his pen."

"Well, I really do love him. I try to show him my love by giving him extra table scraps," noted the wife. "I know he likes that."

"Yes, but you never get into the pen with him to tickle his belly or stroke his back."

"My dear husband," said the Wife. "If I got into that Pigpen, I would get dirty. Very dirty! The ground is one big sloppy mud puddle, and the Pig loves to roll around in it. I prefer to look at him and talk to him without getting into the mud with him."

"I understand," said the Farmer. "But keeping your distance makes the Pig very unhappy. When I visit him, I let him slosh around and splash mud on me."

"I cannot be like you," the Wife replied with a sad frown. "You wear high farming boots but I have no high farming boots. Besides, it's hard for me to see the beauty of the Pig that lies beneath the layers of mud. It's easy to give attention to the Horse; he looks graceful running quietly in the field and he's helpful when he takes me where I need to go. I can even enjoy the Ox whose strong muscles make it possible for you to plow the fields. The Rooster isn't beautiful, but he helps me get up in the morning. The Hens can be nasty sometimes, but

they provide me with good eggs to eat. The Pig — I know he is smart and friendly, but he keeps wallowing in the mud. I don't know how to enjoy his intelligence and friendship without getting sucked up into his mud."

The next day, the Farmer explained to the Pig what his Wife had said.

"Then I will take a bath," said the Pig. "I will make myself look clean so that your Wife will want to spend time with me."

Later, when the Farmer's Wife went out to visit the animals, the Pig snorted loudly and asked her to visit him first.

"See what I've done!" said the Pig. "I washed off the dirt and I've been careful and dry so that no mud would get splashed up onto me."

"You look like the most beautiful Pig I've ever seen," said the Farmer's Wife. "Here are some extra table scraps for you to eat. I'll see you again tomorrow with more food from the house."

"But why won't you come in and play with me?" asked the Pig.

"My dear Pig," said the Farmer's Wife. "You look clean, but how long can you stay clean? And how long can I stay clean if I join you in your pen? You still live in the mud."

Questions for discussion:

Think of people you know who are caught up in sins that they never seem to overcome. Without naming names...

1. What are examples of sinful lifestyles that people like to stay stuck in?
2. How does this affect their relationship with God and with the Church community?
3. What is the sin of the Farmer's Wife?

Part Two



One day, the Farmer's Wife looked out the window of her house and saw the dark figure of a man approaching the farm.

"Who is that?" the Wife asked her husband.

The Farmer's expression grew sad. "That is the Butcher. He is coming to slaughter the Pig."

"No!" said his horrified Wife. "We can't let that happen!"

"Go to the Pig and see if he'll let you hide him from the Butcher."

"I will! I will!" said the Wife as she hurried to the pig pen.

When she got to the pig pen, she found the Pig rolling around in the mud, as usual. She greeted the pig from far enough away to avoid getting splashed by his mud.

"Your life is in danger," she told the Pig.

"I don't see any danger," replied the Pig.

"The Butcher is coming! "

"I don't see any Butcher."

"Trust me, he's coming. The Farmer and I saw him walking down the road toward our farm. Come out of this pig pen, and let me take you to the house. The Farmer will clean you up, and when the Butcher arrives, he won't recognize you. And you should stay in our house