

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-24

INTRODUCTION

- This is probably the most famous of all of Christ's parables
- It describes a love of a father for a son; a love that sacrifices, that endures, that forgives and restores – it is a love that many would aspire to, but few attain to
- When we look at what the story represents to us, that is, the love of God towards sinful man, it elevates this parable above all others for beauty
- No other parable presents a clearer illustration of God's love towards sinners
- It is been referred to as “The gospel within the gospel”
- Luke 15 is the lost and found chapter
- These were given in response to the murmuring of scribes and Pharisees (15:2)
- The Pharisees' words in verse two were intended to be a criticism of the Lord, but in reality they are wonderful tribute to His compassion and mercy to repentant sinners
- The repentant sinner who puts his trust in Christ is received – reconciled and forgiven.
- But more than that, Christ *eateth* with such sinners – the sinner enjoys fellowship and intimate communion with the Saviour (Revelation 3:20)

Consider how the prodigal son pictures mankind in his lost state, and his deep need of repentance.

I. REBELLION AGAINST GOD'S LAWS (11-13)

A. Contempt for the Father

1. A wicked demand
 - a. To claim the inheritance from his living father was to say he wished his father was dead
 - b. Ungrateful man expects God's blessings while living in rebellion against Him
2. A demonstration of selfishness
 - a. Ultimately it is selfishness that is at the heart of every sin

3. The Father's grace
 - a. God allows man the freedom to choose his own way (Deuteronomy 30:19)
 - b. We must be careful what we ask for, as God may grant it (Psalm 106:15)
- B. Departure from the Father
 1. Man in his lost state is "far off" from God (Ephesians 2:13)
 2. Mankind, in rebellion, "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28)
- C. Wasteful living
 1. The word "prodigal" means "wasteful", or "wastefully extravagant".
 2. "Riotous" indicates a debauched and unrestrained life
 3. A life lived independently of God is a life wasted (1 John 2:17)
 4. The prodigal's godless, sinful and wicked course describes the state of every one of us (Ephesians 2:1-3)

II. RUIN OF A GODLESS LIFE (14-16)

- A. God in his providence sends us adversity in order to draw us to himself (Psalm 119:71)
- B. Human help will always fail
 1. Friends will forsake us (Job 16:20; 19:19; Psalm 38:11; Matthew 26:56; 2 Timothy 1:15)
 2. Many, like the Prodigal, seek out a person, a cause, or a change of circumstance as a means to solve their problems (cf. 2 Chronicles 16:7,12)
 3. These can only deal with symptoms, but not the cause – sin
- C. Sin has consequences
 1. "The devil has no truth in advertising" (Hebrews 3:13)
 2. There are pleasures in sin – for a season (Hebrews 11:25)
 3. Sin ends in death (James 1:15)
 4. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7)
 5. The way of transgressors is hard (Proverbs 13:15)

6. Sin will bring us to depths of depravity we never dreamed we would engage in

III. REPENTANCE IN GRIEF AND LOWLINESS (17-20)

- A. A sight and sense of his true state
 1. Most people have a deluded view of their spiritual state before God (Proverbs 20:6; Revelation 3:17)
 2. Unless man “comes to himself” he will perish eternally in his sins
 3. God uses circumstances in our lives to bring us to an end of ourselves
 4. God sends His Spirit to reprove and convict sinners of their sin (John 16:8)
- B. Without repentance there is no salvation (Luke 13:3; Acts 20:21)
 1. Mere reformation, change of lifestyle, morality, etc, is not enough
 2. The true penitent will say without reservation, “I have sinned!”
 3. Yet many have said, “I have sinned”, and never repented
 - a. Pharaoh (Exodus 9:27; 10:16)
 - b. Balaam (Numbers 22:34)
 - c. Saul (1 Samuel 15:24,30; 26:21)
 - d. Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:4)
 5. David shows what true repentance looks like (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51)
 6. True repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action
 7. True repentance is a work of God (Acts 5:31)
- D. Complete surrender
 1. The prodigal went to the Father with no claims of rights or privileges, but begged for mercy, confessing his sin
 2. “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling”

IV. RESTORATION BY GRACIOUS LOVE (20-24)

- A. The Father seeks for the lost
 1. He desires their return

2. He patiently waits to be gracious (Isaiah 30:18)
- B. The Father has compassion on the lost
1. John Trapp (1656) wrote, "One would have thought he should have kicked him, or have killed him rather, but God is *Pater miserationum*, father of mercy, he is all heart."
 2. "What does this much kissing mean? It signifies that, when sinners come to God, he gives them a loving reception, and a hearty welcome." (C H Spurgeon)
- C. The Father reconciles the lost
1. Through the blood of Christ, the sinner is reconciled to God (Colossians 1:20-21)
- D. The Father forgives the lost
1. He is ready to forgive (Psalm 86:5)
 2. He will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7)
 3. Sins are remembered no more (Hebrews 10:17)
- E. He gives His provisions to the repentant
1. The robe – imputed righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)
 2. The ring – riches and sonship (2 Corinthians 8:9)
 3. The shoes – a new walk (Psalms 18:33)
 4. The fatted calf – food that satisfies eternally (John 6:35)

CONCLUSION

1. Has there been a time in your life when you "came to yourself" and realised your sinful and lost condition, and begged God to have mercy upon you through Jesus Christ?
2. The son was dead, but was made alive; he was lost, but was found (Luke 15:24)
3. Have you been quickened, born again and made alive by the regenerating power of God? (Ephesians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
4. Can you now say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1-2)