

Lesson 3: The Prodigal Son

Reference: **Please Read:** Luke 15:11-32

Theme: For God's children who have fallen away – 'Come On Home'

Context: Jesus continues to illustrate the heart of God in reconciling the fallen to himself

Introduction:

Jesus addressing the judgmental Pharisees of their assessment of other Jews, who being in their estimation less worthy than themselves. Yet all have sinned and fallen short- **Ro. 3:23.**

- A beautiful story that depicts the mercy, love and faithfulness of God to His people
- The father in this story represents our Father God
- The younger brother represents the tax collectors and sinners mentioned in **Luke 15:1**
- The older brother represents the Pharisees and religious folks

Even though Jesus was addressing the Jews, the story could also be applied to backslidden Christians who fall away, repent and are restored back into fellowship with the Lord today.

Luke 15:11-12

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them."

An heir was entitled to claim his share of an estate during his father's lifetime if he wished to do so. The eldest son could claim 2/3; the other children would divide the rest- **Dt. 21:17**

- The father in this story had two sons, the younger son received 1/3 of his father's estate
- The older son decided to remain faithfully at the side of his father and serve him

Falling off the Deep End

Luke 15:13, "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living."

- A "distant country" in the Jewish mind would be the Gentile nations
- Infers being subject to and complying with their culture and customs- against the Lord
 - o **Exodus 19:5-6; Dt. 14:2; 26:18-19; 2 Kings 17:15; Ezra 9:1-2; Psalms 135:4**
- Don't be godless like Esau- don't sell your birth right- **Gen. 25:29-34; Heb. 12:16**

Jewish people like the Church were given a mandate not to be yoked together with unbelievers, because of how it influences and corrupts good character- a special people.

1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Peter 2:1-12

- The charge and the challenge is to continue in the faith- persevere and remain faithful
- As believers in Jesus Christ, we can't use grace as a license for immorality- **Jude 4**
- God is longsuffering with us, but there are consequences to persisting in disobedience
 - o **1 Cor. 5:1-5; 6:9-11; 11:27-32; Gal. 6:7-10; 1 Timothy 1:20; Hebrews 10:26-31**
- Note that the young man did not waste all his inheritance in his home town
- He set off by himself to a distant place, alone so family could not see- no accountability
- The snare was being alone, outside the protection of his family, where he was tempted

The Greek word for "squandered" is diaskorpizo, which means, "to disperse, scatter abroad or to waste." Conveys reckless abandonment, spending without any regard for the future.

- The words "wild living" literally means, "Living without saving anything" **Proverbs 20:21**
- Referring to disorderly behavior; a perpetual orgy of parties, prostitutes/wine- **Lk. 15:30**

1 Corinthians 15:33-34, "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God — I say this to your shame."

In this picture of the prodigal son, we see a man who has wandered far away from home and has become easy pickings for the world to entice, ensnare and rob him of everything of value.

Home Coming – Vs 17-19

- Thankfully, after eating enough of the world's garbage, he comes to his senses
- Having hit rock bottom, he begins to honestly examine the reality of his situation
- The first step to recovery is to admit that we have a problem and need help
- When he left as a son it was "Give me..." with a selfish demand, now it's humble pie

Lk 15:20-21: What is interesting is that the Father was ready and willing to receive his wayward son since the time he left home, knowing the toll sin and depravation would have on him.

- **Please Read: James 4:8-10**
- When we fall away from God, we are the ones to come back to Him in repentance.
- We are the ones who are to confess our sins unto a loving Father God- **1 John 1:9**
- When we need help, we are the ones to come to His throne of Grace- **Hebrews 4:16**
- That is how our faith operates as we draw near to God; our faith releases God's grace
- Before the son had a chance to make his confession, he was embraced and kissed
- Kiss represented affection, reconciliation; to dispel any doubts the son may have had
- The father made no speeches, "Well I told you so..." no condemnation, shame or guilt
- This point was important for the Pharisees to grasp, that God accepts repentant sinners

Psalms 103:12, "...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

Facilitator Discussion Notes:

Question: “Do you know what the law of diminishing return is?”

The law of diminishing return in regards to sin, is that the high or climax of each pleasurable experience is slowly diminished until there is no pleasure found at all, and ends in death.

- This is best seen in addiction, particularly drug addiction that enslaves millions
- Addiction becomes so bad when people hit the bottom, life sustaining activities like eating and sleeping is neglected. The person will soon die of exhaustion or malnutrition.
- The early stages of addiction are characterized by tolerance and dependence

Psalms 16:11 NKJV, “You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

- Biblical pleasure and joy comes from God and is protected by His commands
- Sin is the exploitation, corruption/perversion of God’s plan for pleasure and enjoyment
- Satan uses it as a hook for slavery and bondage- **John 8:34; Romans chapter 6**

Question: “What does ‘Killing the Fattened Calf’ represent in this parable?”

The fattened calf was held in reserve for special occasions, when an honored guest should come and they could create a feast in a hurry. This was no small event- spared no expense.

- This incredible act of love and restoration had nothing to do with deserving anything
- It had everything to do with mercy, which God extends to anyone who repents from sin
- Notice he gets the best robe, reserved for honored guests – represents righteousness
- Rings in Bible times were very significant, they represented wealth, position and dignity

For the prodigal it meant complete restoration as a son back into the family, with all the rights and privileges that he had formerly lost. Servants often times did not wear shoes, by the father commanding that sandals be put on his feet meant that he was to be treated as a son.

Question: “The older brother was not happy about his father’s mercy- why the anger?”

- He felt that the whole thing was unfair, that he toiled and got nothing for it
- But whose fault was that, everything the father had belonged to this son- vs 31-32
- We have to release our faith in the promises of God and receive our inheritance

Please Pray For One Another In Closing