



Lessons In Sonship

The Parable of the Prodigal Son



'Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'" Luke 15:1-2

This series we are taking a deeper dive into a popular parable, often called the prodigal son. This was one of three parables Jesus shared after the Pharisees and teachers of religious law had questioned why He seemed to always be with what they called 'sinners'. Jesus shared this with the intention to demonstrate how man can veer away from God's desired plan and the lengths our Father in heaven will go to redeem His children.

What was in the heart of the sons? Why did the father respond the way he did? How can we relate to this in today's living?



Day 1

Danger of Self-Reliance

“...A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.” Luke 15:11-12

The parable begins with the younger son made a strange request from his father for his inheritance. An inheritance is usually bequeathed to a beneficiary once a person dies as part of the person's last will and testament. However, this son's request essentially said he wasn't willing to wait for the process and he wanted ownership immediately. Let's note that at no point was it recorded that the father had denied the younger son access to anything while under his care. Neither did the son seek the father's counsel on how to manage what he wanted. The younger son simply wanted independence from his father.

“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.” Luke 15:13

By disconnecting himself completely from his father and without any form of accountability structure in place, unsurprisingly he wasted all his inheritance in a short time. The issue wasn't the son's desire to stand as a man, it was his posture of rebellion which led to his ruin. We may wonder how this applies to us and our walk with God.

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

When we ignore or violate God's principles or instructions, we're essentially telling God we have the capacity to be our own Lord which means we take on full responsibility for everything we engage in by ourselves, without support from heaven. Jesus understood the results He achieved were because of His dependence on the Father and if He needed to depend on the Father, how much more do we need to do the same. Considering how limited we are as people in our understanding and access to vital information about the future, self-reliance is a dangerous place to be. Our vulnerability should be to our Father in heaven who has the capacity and desire to give us His very best.

Prayer: Lord help me live a life totally reliant on You.



Day 2

Facing Consequences

'But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.' Luke 15:14

As the parable progresses, we see how the son's decision affected him. There was no money, nothing in place for sustenance and then the land he'd chosen to stay in now experienced a severe famine –an economic recession in today's terms. A favoured son from an affluent background now became destitute and someone nobody was willing to help.

'The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.' Luke 15:16 NLT

The psalmist tells us that when the Lord is our shepherd who we allow to teach, direct us, we will not be in want (Ps 23:1). Not being in want doesn't mean we will not experience challenges in life, but the Lord will be with us through it all during such periods. This young man's experience was very different; he was totally alone as the people he'd spent his money on were nowhere to be found. His only way out was to be engaged by a farmer whose level of esteem for him was so low that the only work he would give him was to feed pigs and even then the farmer wouldn't feed the son.

'Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way.' Psalms 119:37

'He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.' Proverbs 13:20

The son didn't waste his inheritance alone, there would have been people encouraging him to do so, yet nowhere to be found when the funds ran out and he began to suffer. Had the son known at the time of making the demand for his share where he would end up, he would likely have gone about things differently. Similarly there are many decisions that we realize with the benefit of hindsight we shouldn't have made in the first place and are trying to work our way out of it. But we don't have to live life by trial and error, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us if only we're willing to surrender to Him and His guidance.

Prayer: Lord grant me the grace to walk with the wise and the strength to disconnect from foolish people in my life.

Day 3

Recognition and Repentance

'But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!' Luke 15:17

The son came to the realization of all he'd done wrong and asked himself some deep and honest questions about his choices and their consequences. Likewise, there comes a point where we need to take stock of our lives and do an honest evaluation of where are we compared to where we ought to be. When we look at our lives, does it reflect the character of our Father in heaven? Does our life match up to the things Jesus paid for or are there still gaps?

'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you..." And he arose and came to his father...' Luke 15:18,20

Beyond recognition he took the most crucial next step of repentance. Repentance isn't feeling bad about something, rather it means actively turning away from that thing. True repentance starts in the heart and then the necessary actions follow. The son determined what he was going to do and he actually did it. The gap between thought and action is often where the enemy gets us. That's when he starts trying to remind us of all the things we've done wrong and why we shouldn't think God can forgive us. Even if we believe God will forgive us, he will remind us of how we may look to others and amplify people's opinions of us beyond reason. These are just part of his tactics to keep us from coming back to God.

'I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.' Luke 5:32

Guess what? Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners and even when we make mistakes, He leaves the door wide open for us to quickly return to Him. Let's not give room to the devil to make us think otherwise.

Prayer: Lord Jesus I have made mistakes, but I ask that You please forgive me and have mercy on me. I turn away totally from my misdeeds and come to You today to dedicate my life to You. Thank You for always loving me.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Starving and destitute while his father's servants were well fed and taken care of.

Day 4

The Father's Love

'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.' Luke 15:20

When the prodigal son decided to return home, the Bible tells us that his father saw him a great way off. Which means very likely the man had been looking out for the day his son would return home. The father didn't wait for the son to come crawling back to him and then condemn him for his obvious poor choices. Rather he ran to meet his son while the young man was still on his way and showered him with his love. The father never stopped loving his son.

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3:16

'...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night...'
Revelation 12:10

When Jesus died for us on the cross, it wasn't because we deserved it, quite the opposite. He did it because the love of the Father sponsored the entire exercise of redeeming man to Himself. He is fully aware of all the things we have done wrong as we have an accuser, Satan who accuses us day and night, bringing up all our failings. As people we try and put sin in grades, perhaps to make ourselves feel better. But it's important we understand that with God, sin is sin. Yet in spite of our sin, God continues to love us and look for ways to bring us back to Him.

'nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 8:39

Now Satan knows that nothing can separate us from God's love, but he doesn't want us to know and experience this love. So he constantly brings all forms of condemnation to us. God never condemns us. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, meaning He brings us to the realization of sin in our lives, but He never condemns us. Once we come to that realization, our response should be to confess our sin and repent from it so our walk with God can be restored.

Prayer: Father I see now that nothing I do can ever make you stop loving me. Help me realize where the enemy has kept me in condemnation so I can break out of it by the power of Your love and the price Jesus paid for me.



Day 5

Immediate Restoration

'But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found... And they began to be merry.' Luke 15:22,24

As soon as the son confessed his sin, two things happened immediately, he was brought back under the father's cover as signified by the robe and received the father's authority as signified by the ring on his hand. The father received the son back and restored him to his rightful position. The same way when we truly repent and return to Jesus, He restores us immediately. This is why Satan focuses on condemnation, so he can continue to harass us.

'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.' Luke 15:24

'Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' Luke 15:10

Heaven is excited when we repent, because we're instantly moved from darkness to light, spiritual death to life. This is the joy the father felt when the son returned and the entire household rejoiced with him. There is never any condemnation for a repented soul by God. We will have to deal with the consequences of our actions, but God never condemns us.

'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?' Romans 6:1-2

Some may wonder, if Jesus keeps taking us back, does that mean we should keep on doing what we know is wrong? The answer is a resounding No! remember true repentance is from the heart. If we keep doing what we shouldn't with the mindset that we can keep doing it because Jesus will forgive us anyway then we haven't repented, no matter how bad we may feel at the time. When we truly repent and give Jesus room to be Lord in our lives, mistakes will still be made, however sin will no longer be our lifestyle.

Prayer: Thank You Lord that I have access to immediate restoration when I return to You. Help me never hesitate to return to you.



Day 6

Son or Slave?

'The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends.' Luke 15:28-29 NLT

We see a very interesting twist in the narrative where the son who stayed at home revealed his displeasure at the welcome his brother received. In expressing his displeasure, the son also revealed his mindset – even though he stayed at home, he had the mentality of a slave. Though the younger son exercised very poor judgement in how he spent his inheritance, he clearly knew what he had access to. The son who remained with his father however didn't seem to have this understanding.

'...So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.' Luke 15:12

Remember the father shared his wealth between both sons. There's no way the younger son would have taken his inheritance if his older brother had not received his own share first. Yet the older son related with his father as a servant, rather than a son who had ownership of the estate. The older son was evidently just as prodigal in his heart and it likely may have been just a matter of time before he also left the father.

'His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours.' Luke 15:31

The father patiently reminded the son of his identity – as a son he had access to everything, so he didn't need to wait to be given handouts. This is critical for us because the enemy has robbed many of us of our identity in Christ. In spite of all the deception and condemnation he tries to throw our way, we must never lose our identity – we are more than conquerors (Rom 8:37), we are kings and priests (Rev 5:10), Christ has given us His authority to trample over all the powers of the enemy (Luke 10:19) and we are seated with Him in heavenly realms (Eph 2:6).

Prayer: Thank You Father for reminding me of my identity, help me keep this front and center of my mind always.

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