

“THE FATHER IS WAITING”

(How Jesus Ministers to the Prodigal Saint and the Prodigal Sinner)
Luke 15:11-24

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to keep His final Passover.
2. A group of Publicans (tax collectors) and sinners gather around Him. (v. 2)
3. Upon seeing this take place, the Pharisees and Scribes murmur saying: *“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them”* (v. 2)
4. The Pharisees and scribes (filled with pride and self-righteousness) looked with contempt upon sinners.
 - They avoided the sinner!
 - They wouldn’t even shake hands with sinners!
 - They rebuked Jesus for joining with sinners!

(And the Pharisees and Scribes tell on themselves)

What a revelation...

...that when you come to the place where you reject people because you feel that they are less righteous than you.

...pride has so swallowed us up that we are blinded to our own moral corruption. (Repeat)

Remember this,

By eating with sinners, Jesus reveals how much He loves us and longs to restore us to Himself!

Questions with answers:

1. What causes someone to journey into a far country?
2. What steps lead to the pigpen?
3. What leads a person to “come to himself”?
4. How does our Father respond to “deep repentance”?
5. And what difference does it make in your life and mine?

I. The Road Of The Son

“He took his journey into a far country.” (v. 13)

Question: What traps does the enemy set to lead you down the wrong road and steal your inheritance?

Question: Exactly why did the son become a prodigal?

Four Traps for Saints & Sinners

Trap #1: An “Impatient” Spirit” (v. 12)

“Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.” (v. 12)

Fact: The younger son is not content to wait.

Fact: He won’t wait for the time when father dies.

Fact: He wants his part of the estate now. (Why?)

*So he might enjoy it before his time!!

What a Trap of Satan

To get you to trade in your long term reward – for a short term fling, good feeling and immediate gratification!

Fact: Impatient saints become prodigal saints.

Fact: Those who lose perspective of “down the road”

Fact: Those not willing to dig deep, take time and discipline day after day.

Trap #2: An “Independent” Spirit (v. 13)

Notice v. 13 - “A far country”

Question: Why journey into a far country?

Answer: So he can live independent of father’s will and out from under father’s authority.

A popular song: “I did it my way”

- He wants to be his own boss!
- He wants to bypass all the fences and guardrails!
- He wants to live life foot loose and fancy free!

So he rebels against authority.

- And rebellion always leads to ruin when the bills come due!

Question: Why doesn’t the father beg, resist and make the boy stay at home?

Answer: Because it does no good to sit in God’s house if on the inside I am estranged
From God’s heart. (Repeat)

Trap #3 An “Indifferent” Spirit

- “*The younger son gathered all together.*” (v. 13)

Question: How could the son go to his room, pack all of his belongs; take his Nintendo, computer games, sports equipment, clothes, CD player and just walk out?

Answer: Because he became indifferent to the love of his father!
Indifferent to the prayers of dad!
Indifferent to the prayers of Father!

Trap #3 is...

...to get you to not care how Jesus feels about what you’re doing!

Trap #4: An “Indulgent” Spirit

v. 13 “*He wasted his substance with riotous living!*”

v. 14 “*He spent it all.*”

Fact: Wandering always leads to wasting.

Fact: Resources run out and friends run off.

Fact: Life away from Father was not what he expected.

Fact: The devil has lied again saying; “you can indulge yourself now without any long term

consequences.”

II. The Ruin Of The Son

(v. 14) “He spent it all.”

(v. 14) “He began to be in want.”

(v. 15) “He ended up in the pigpen.”

(v. 16) “No man gave unto him.”

Not even food to eat.

Question: Why didn't the father chase down the son in the pigpen and beg him to come home?

Answer: Because until we are in touch with the pain our sin has caused Father, we are destined to repeat it. (Repeat)

And

If you remove the pain too quickly, you remove the motivation to repent and be free from it happening again. (Repeat)

Fact: God used the “famine” to get his attention.

Fact: God used the “pigpen” to get his attention.

Fact: God used the “spent it all” to get his attention.

Discover the state of ruin of a prodigal.

1. The prodigal is in a state of **deception** (thinking that something apart from God can satisfy his thirst.)
2. The prodigal is in a state of **distance** (because he travels away from God to do his own thing.)
3. The prodigal is in a state of **wasting** (as his substance runs out in time).
4. The prodigal is in a state of **slavery** (when what he wanted now controls his life).
5. The prodigal is in a state of **wanting** (as what he had to have takes wings and flies away).

III. The Return Of The Son

(V 17) “*And when he came to himself.*”

Fact: His sin was made bitter so he would leave it!

v. 17) “*Father is feeding everyone else and I perish with hunger.*”

Question: What do you do when the Spirit awakens your conscience?

Answer: “*I will arise and go to my father.*” (v. 18)

“*And he arose and came to his Father.*” (v. 20)

Father has been praying all the while.

“*Return unto thy rest.*” (Psalm 116:7)

“*Return, return, return.*” (Song of Solomon 6:13)

“*Return O Israel*” (Jeremiah 3:12)

“*I will go and return.*” (Hosea 2:7)

“*In return and rest shall ye be saved.*” (Isaiah 30:15)

Oh how we object.

1. "But I've been away too long."
2. "But I've offended Father too much."
3. "But I've dishonored God real bad."
4. "But I've sinned too deep."
5. "But I feel like running from God".
6. "But I've been living two lives."
7. "But how will Father respond to me?"

Here's your answer

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

Question: Why does father see?

Question: Why does Father feel?

Question: Why does Father run?

One reason

To reveal to us that God is more willing to forgive than we are to ask Him. (Repeat)

Fact: The son was never too far to be reached.

Fact: And you are never too far to be reached.

IV. The Reunion Of the Son

Fact: "I'm not worthy to be called your son."

Fact: But God responds to all of your excuses.

In v. 22 & 23

1. The Robe

- The boy comes in rags and gets a robe.
- The robe signifies release from all condemnation and imputation of the righteousness of Jesus.

2. The Ring

- The ring was a mark of dignity and often used as a seal.
- God's spirit will seal you (or confirm in your heart that you belong to Jesus today).

3. The Shoes

- Those taken captive had their shoes taken off (when they were restored to liberty, their shoes were given back).
- The shoes are a sign of freedom, how Jesus will free you from the power of sin and satan today.

4. The Calf

- The calf was sacrificed at public feasts on occasions of great joy.
- So there is joy unspeakable for those who return to the Lord and are fully restored!!!

Conclusion

Question: Why did the father run when in the east old men do not run?

1. Because there was joy in Father's heart to restore His son.

But more than that

2. According to Deut. 21:18-21 the rebellious son should have been stoned to death upon returning.

◆ So, if the villagers stone the son, they will have to stone the father who is embracing the son!!!

Oh, what a picture of Jesus!

At the cross to take your punishment and mine!!!

Amen
Bill Kirk