

THE PRODIGAL SON AND ELDER BROTHER

Luke 15:1-32

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus contrasts the lost and found in these three Parables.
- B. He is showing God's attitude toward the ONE lost in the highways and byways of sin in the Parable of the Lost Sheep.
- C. He is showing the value of a human soul and what our attitude should be toward the lost in the Parable of the Lost Coin.
- D. And in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, he is showing the possibility of apostasy from our Father's house. And the elder brother's attitude is quite typical of many brethren in the church who see their brothers in Christ return home.

I. THE PRODIGAL SON GOT AWAY FROM HIS FATHER'S HOUSE BECAUSE:

- A. He demanded the privileges of manhood before he knew how to use them.
("Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me...")
- B. Parental indulgence - His father agreed to his demands.
("So he divided to them his livelihood.")
- C. Cut loose from the old home ties.
("And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country.")
- D. Spent his money recklessly in riotous living.
("Wasted his possessions with prodigal living.") Going after a big time.
- E. Overtaken by hard times with nothing saved up and not even a job.
("There arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.")
- F. Took up a degrading occupation.
("To feed swine.")

II. WHEN THE PRODIGAL GOT AWAY FROM HOME WHAT HAD HE LOST?

- A. His appreciation for the main things of life.
- B. His home and father and all good things.

- C. His self-control.
- D. His money.
- E. His social standing and friends.
- F. His chance to make a living and be somebody.
- G. All but his life - and saw that, too, going.
 ("And I perish with hunger.")

III. SIN STEP BY STEP PLACED ITS DEADLY COILS ABOUT HIM.

- A. DESIRE: To get away from home and God.
- B. DEMAND: "Give me the portion of goods."
- C. DEPARTURE: "Took his journey."
- D. DISSIPATION: "Wasted his substance."
 (Not even repentance can make up for this.)
- E. DESTITUTION: "Began to be in want."
- F. DEGRADATION: "Joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine."
- G. DEFEAT AND DEATH: "No one gave him anything." "I perish with hunger."

IV. THIS PARTICULAR PRODIGAL HAD THREE GREAT THINGS LEFT WHEN HE FINALLY CAME TO HIMSELF.

- A. He had the willingness to take the lowest place - and work.
 ("He sent him into his field to feed swine.")
- B. He had the willingness to think and to face the facts in his case.
 (He was slowly dying of hunger. And he would be better off as his father's servant than to die in this strange land. He would change it all or die trying.)
- C. He had the willingness to get up and away from sin and starvation and go back home.

V. ALL MEN MUST COME HOME TO GOD MUCH LIKE THE PRODIGAL RETURNED TO HIS FATHER.

- A. There are five distinct steps:

1. Reflection: "When he came to himself"
2. Resolution: "I will arise and go to my father"
3. Return: "And he arose and came to the father"
4. Restoration: "He was not made a hireling, but a son and heir."
5. Rejoicing: "This my son was dead and is alive - was lost and is now found"

VI. THE PRODIGAL SON LEARNED FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM HIS FOOLISH JOURNEY.

- A. That his getting away from home for a big time was nonsense and foolishness.
- B. That he could rise up and get away from the evil life - If he would.
- C. That the father was looking for him and able to see him afar off and understand his need.
- D. The father loved him so much, forgave him so readily, and restored him to sonship.
- E. His coming home brought so much joy and rejoicing.

VII. THIS PARABLE TEACHES THESE GREAT THINGS ABOUT GOD OUR FATHER.

- A. His amazing goodness and grace.
 1. Treated his hired servants well.
 2. Gave both boys all he had while they were with him.
 3. Gave the younger one his rightful portion - though it was not due him yet.
 4. Entreated his oldest son to be generous and forgiving.
- B. His unchanging love and mercy.
 1. Loved the prodigal before he went astray.
 2. Loved him and looked for him while away.

3. Saw him afar off and ran to meet him, embraced him, forgave him, and restored him to sonship.

4. Gave him the best he had.

C. His endless power and blessing.

1. Forgives the guiltiest soul with a word.

2. Restores the most wayward of earth to the bonds of sonship.

3. Gives the greatest sinner the most marvelous reception.

4. Bestows the best gifts of heaven upon the unworthy one who repents.

5. Rejoices more over the returning sinner than all other things.

VIII. THE CHINESE PREACHER'S SERMON ON THE PRODIGAL SON.

A. HIS MADNESS:

1. His traveling.

2. His reveling.

3. His groveling.

B. HIS SADNESS:

1. He went to the dogs.

2. He ate with the hogs.

3. He homeward jogs.

C. HIS GLADNESS:

1. He receives the seal.

2. He eats the veal.

3. He dances the reel.

IX. THIS PARABLE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

A. THE FLIGHT:

1. The question we can't escape.
2. Two sons and two sins.
3. How to get lost.
4. Waste.

B. CRISIS:

5. Making life's crises count.
6. The road to self-discovery.
7. A new look at home.
8. Prelude to forgiveness.

C. RETURN:

9. The giant step.
10. Portrait of a Father.
11. The new garments.
12. God had three sons.