
Intro:

A. Understanding the Context: With the parable of "The Prodigal Son", Jesus reaches the apex in His response to the charge against Him by the Pharisees and scribes...

1. Their accusation? "This man receives sinners and eats with them." - Lk 15:2
   a. Luke 15:2 ---- 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

2. His response? A triptych (pronounced "trip-tick," from the Greek tri- "three" + ptychē "fold“ Three parables in which He illustrates "The Father's Yearning Love For The Lost" (Hendriksen)...
   a. "The Lost Sheep" - Lk 15:3-7
      (1) Luke 15:3-7 ---- 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?5 “And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.6 “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’7 “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.
   b. "The Lost Coin" - Lk 15:8-10
      (1) Luke 15:8-10 ---- 8 “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?9 “And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’10 “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
   c. "The Prodigal Son" - Lk 15:11-32
      (1) Luke 15:11-32 ---- 11 Then He said: “A certain man had two sons.12 “And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood.13 “And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.14 “But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.15 “Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.16 “And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.17 “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!18 ‘I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,19 “and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’20 “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.21 “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’22 “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.23 ‘And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;24 ‘for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.26 “So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.27 “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your
father has killed the fatted calf.’ 28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 “So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 ‘But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 ‘It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

B. The parable of "The Prodigal Son" has been called...
1. "The pearl and crown of all the parables" (Trench)
2. Evangelium in Evangelio (i.e., The Gospel within the Gospel)
3. While it is commonly called "The Prodigal Son" (prodigal meaning "wasteful")...
   a. It can rightfully be called the parable of "The Loving Father" (Wiersbe)
   b. For it reveals more about the love of the father than of the sinfulness of the younger son
4. The parable also reveals much about the heart of the unforgiving elder son, whose purpose in this parable is to rebuke those unwilling to reach out and receive the lost who repent

C. The Central Theme:
1. God’s Love For Sinful Man & His Desire To Save Us –
   a. God Seeks Our Safety . . .
   b. We Are Valuable To God. . .
2. The Desire of Our Heavenly Father That The Erring Sinner Repent!! (cf. 2 Peter 3:9)
   a. 2 Peter 3:9 ---- 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

D. Several Lessons for Us To Learn from this parable of Christ:
1. What Sin Is -
2. The Destructive Nature of Sin –
3. The Power To Change
4. God will forgive the penitent sinner who returns to Him –
5. Our Need To Forgive The Sinner Who Returns Home!!

II. He Left Home - Lk 15:11-13a - vrs 11 Then He said: “A certain man had two sons.
A. He Asked For His Inheritance – vrs 12
1. Luke 15:12 ---- 12 “And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood.

B. Took his things and went to the “Far Country” – vrs 13a
1. Luke 15:13 ---- 13 “And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together,

C. In many instances this is true when we sin - we leave the place of safety.

III. His Life Abroad - Lk 15:13b-16
A. Wasted His Inheritance (i.e. – he was a prodigal) – vrs 13b
1. Vrs 13b ---- journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

B. Fell on REAL Hard Times - vrs 14
1. Luke 15:14 ---- 14 “But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

C. Joined Himself to a Citizen of the “Far Country” and fed swine – vrs 15
1. Luke 15:15 ---- 15 “Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
D. Was Hungry, and no one helped him – vrs 16
   1. Luke 15:16 ---- 16 “And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

IV. His Return Home - Lk 15:17-20a
   A. He Came To Himself – vrs 17
      1. Luke 15:17 ---- 17 “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!’
   B. He Resolves To Return Home - vrs 18a
      1. Luke 15:18 ---- 18 ‘I will arise and go to my father, 2. He Acknowledged His Sin And Humbled Himself – vrs 18b, 19
         a. and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 “and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’
   C. He Followed Through With His Decision to return Home – vrs 20a
      1. Luke 15:20 ---- 20 “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.

   Albert Einstein - If you keep doing the same things over and over again you cannot expect to have different results.

V. His Reception - Lk 15:20b-32
   A. His Father Was Extremely GLAD to See Him! – vrs 20b
      1. Luke 15:20 ---- 20 ‘.... 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.’
   B. After The Young Man Confessed His Sins— The Father Sent For Him The Best Robe, a Ring, Sandals, & The Fatted Calf – vrs 21-23
      1. Luke 15:21-23 ---- 21 “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’22 “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.23 ‘And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;’
   C. They “Began To Be Merry” – For His Son “Was Dead And Is Alive Again, He was Lost And Is Found” - vrs 24
      1. Luke 15:24 ---- 24 ‘for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.
   D. The Anger of The Older Brother! – vrs 25-30
      1. Luke 15:25-30 ---- 25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.26 “So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.27 “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.29 “So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.30 ‘But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’
   E. The Father Acknowledged The Older Son’s Faithfulness and Assured Him of His Inheritance - vrs 31
      1. Luke 15:31 ---- 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.
   F. The Father Defends His Actions - “It Was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your
brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ “ – vrs 31,32

1. Luke 15:31-32 ---- 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 ‘It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

VI. **Applying The Parable Of "The Prodigal Son"**

**A. The Main Elements**

1. The father symbolizes our heavenly Father
2. The prodigal son in coming home represents the penitent sinner
3. The elder brother reflected the attitude of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes - cf. Lk 15:2
   a. Luke 15:2 ---- 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

**B. The Key Lessons**

1. Our heavenly Father loves His children and LONGS for their salvation.
2. There is "joy in heaven" when the sinner returns with a penitent attitude - Lk 15:7,10,32; 2 Pet 3:9; John 3:16; Acts 17:30; Acts 22:16
   a. Luke 15:7 ---- 7 “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.
   b. Luke 15:10,32 ---- 10 “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
      (1) 32 ‘It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”
   c. 2 Peter 3:9 ---- 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
   d. John 3:16 ---- 16 “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.
   e. Acts 17:30 ---- 30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,
   f. Acts 22:16 ---- 16 ‘And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’
3. We need to understand the proper way to receive the erring child who returns to God
4. Not with jealousy, but with joyous celebration!
5. With a strong reaffirmation of love - 2 Cor. 2:6-8
   a. 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 ---- 6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

VII. **Conclusion:**

**A. Are You Like Someone In This Parable?**

1. The Prodigal Son?
2. The Unforgiving Son?
3. The Loving Father?

**B. If you find yourself like the prodigal son then:**

1. 2 Cor. 5:20 - Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.