



The Prodigal Son

Feb 5, 2017

Scripture Reading: Luke 15; 11-24

The Prodigal Son's story is a very familiar story. I am going to just expand what I talked about last week. The lost sheep drifted away ignorantly, foolishly but not willfully! The story of the prodigal son is all about a stubborn, rebellious son, who willfully got lost. We as parents try to give our children the best education, teach them what is right and what is wrong, and give them real foundation concerning the law of the Lord. Some of our kids want to go out and explore the world. Let us see through this story why we all like to drift away from the house of God and go on our own. I was a prodigal son before I got saved, and so I may be able to speak with authority on this subject. The prodigal son story is a very familiar story for all of us, and so I will just drive home certain critical points.

Luke 15:11-12.

11 And He said, "A man had two sons.

12 "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them.

A lovely family, an ideal family! Two boys from the same family and they both seem to be different. We always tend to pamper the younger one, and we spoil them. Almost, always they become very self-willed, and stubborn. On the other hand, the elder ones usually become more responsible, and helpful!

I. The prodigal son

Here in this story, we come across blatant, rebellious behavior of the younger son. He wanted to move out of the house! This behavior may not be shocking in our culture. It is not uncommon for kids to move away from their house someday. Actually, as parents, we also want them to stand on their legs and not be dependent on us all their lives. But the culture in the Middle East during Jesus time was very different. We came across Abraham, Isaac, Jacob story. They were all living together. If you read David's story, you can see this joint family system.

If you go to Israel, you will still see four generations living together in some places but each family in their houses, which may be about twenty feet apart, but they did everything together. So it must have come as a real shock for the father when the younger son wanted his share, and he wanted to move out for good! There was no reason for the younger one to leave the family at all! Everything was provided for him. Perhaps, the only thing that was expected from



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him was his contribution toward mundane daily help on the farm. But he decided to leave the family and go on his own. Not to a nearby place but a far country! Our kids sometimes choose college very far away from home. Why did the younger son decide to leave?

The younger son may have gotten tired of this dull, mundane work!

- He wanted excitement.
- He wanted pleasure!
- He wanted a change of scenery.
- He wanted to live out his dreams and resisted living according to his father's dream.

He demanded his share of wealth. Technically, as long as the father lives the property belongs to the father. But yet the father agreed to his son's demand. Why?

This is an excellent topic for the parents. When to let the children go and when not to. Why did the father let this son go even though the son was not mature enough to handle himself?

Discussion: what would you do? Why?

1. The son will not listen. The younger son's mind was made up. He thought, he knew more than his father.
2. Note! Even though the son was rebellious, his father did not kick him out of the house. The father knew that the son might not make it.
3. The best way to learn is through personal experience. The son felt that he could handle the world by himself. The father had to let him go to make him learn the hard lessons of life himself.
4. The relationship between the father and son came to a dead end. The son decided to go to a far, far away land. He did not want to see his loving father anymore. No more weekly visits, no more monthly visits, no more yearly visits either.
5. The more we try to control our children the further they will move away.
6. The father knew that he may not see him ever again. He knew that he would squander his money and starve. Still, he reluctantly gave his son his share. The father hoped and prayed that the son would come to his senses soon and get hold of his life!



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Luke 15:13. 13“And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

The younger son showed his foolishness again. He could have taken just a little bit of money at first, gone around scouting various places, and carefully planning his life. But he did not. He immediately took all his money and went on a journey to a distant Disney land! Scripture says that he squandered his money with loose living. His city may have been something like Las Vegas. He may have probably spent his money on wine, women, and drugs. His eyes were on pleasure and not on careful investments. He thought that the money could keep coming to him miraculously. But it did not!

Luke 15:14. 14“Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished.

The younger son may have thought that he could live with what he had forever. But an unexpected thing happened. Famine came. Inflation ate up all his savings! Don't trust in your savings! Don't put your confidence in your 401k and 401a. It can disappear just like that, especially if the stock market collapses!

Luke 15: 15, 16. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16“And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

Now the rich prodigal son became a pauper, and he had to work in a pig farm to feed himself. The price of food due to famine became so intense that he could not afford to buy groceries. He started feeding on pigs' horrible food. You can see this happening even today. A lot of drug addicts lose all their money, and they start looking through the trash cans to find food. Note the Word; no one was giving him anything. The famine was so harsh, no one could share their food with others!

II. Prodigal son comes to his senses and returns to His father!

Luke 15: 17-19.

17“But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

18‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;



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19I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

Finally, the prodigal son came to his senses! He must have thought about where he was, and where he is now. Earlier in his life, he was surrounded by loving family members and servants. He had a warm house and good food. But now he had to compete with pigs for food. He had no place to call his own, and no friends. His so-called friends might have left him the minute he became a pauper. This was not what he wanted in his life.

This is a good passage for drug users who constantly go down and cannot come out of it. First of all, we have to make them come to their senses. We have to make them see where they were and where they are now. The minute they start losing their car, they need to be awakened from their drug sleep. But they will not listen. They tend to come to their senses when they get locked up in prison for stealing merchandise. Only severe suffering makes us come to our senses!

The prodigal son must have had a massive ego also. He chose the far away country thinking he may never need his family again. But now the suffering was so bad, he had to swallow his ego and had to return, if he wanted to avoid death from hunger. He not only decided to swallow his ego and go back, but he was willing to repent, confess, and ask for forgiveness.

18. Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;

19. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”

He realized that he had wasted away all his shares, and he wanted his dad to accept him just as a hired servant, not as his prodigal son.

III. Father's Response!

The father's response was totally stunning!

Luke 15:20-24.

20“So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

21“And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22“But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;



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23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;

24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'
And they began to celebrate.

The father spotted his son while he was far off. Instead of getting angry with his son, he was moved with compassion! How could you be compassionate with your son who has wasted away one-third of your wealth in a foolish manner? Our natural response would be excessive anger. We may be able to control it, but we would not have run to meet him. We would have given him a cold, resentful welcome, and would have been naturally indifferent. We might have even screamed at the son for squandering all the hard earned money. But this father did not even bring his past. He just embraced him and welcomed him! He then told his servant to bring quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet! The father restored the prodigal son back to his sonship. All those symbols of best robe, sandals, and ring mean just that! **SONSHIP**

He didn't stop with that. He called for a fatted calf to be slaughtered so that he can have a huge party. I know, it is not a big deal in the USA. Most of us eat meat almost every day. But in the Middle East, it was a rarity. It had to be some special occasion something like a wedding or Bar Mitzvah. Also, calf is a big animal. It was slaughtered so that the whole village could be fed! Besides that, there was music and dancing! What was the reason for such a big party? Let's hear that from the father's mouth itself!

23 bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;

24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'
And they began to celebrate.

The father yearned for the fellowship of his son. His joy was lost. Now the joy of his life is back. The son was so lost, he could have been easily dead. But now he is found! A great cause for celebration!

Will the younger son be a changed person? We do not know! He could still be drinking and chasing women. He could very well be the same person as he left. But now he will be showing his face now and then, and hopefully, he will labor together with his father. He was dead before but now he is standing before his father and breathing. There is going to be at least a little companionship. Just being present with our loved ones is the most joyful thing in life. Such companionship is a God given gift. Sometimes, we come real hard on our loved ones because they are not paying attention or don't pitch in or they don't care for us, or they don't



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talk to us nor listen to us, and we hate them because they are in their own world. What if that person was deaf and dumb? I am sure, we would have loved that person dearly. Let us accept one another as they are. We can try to correct them. But if they don't change, don't fret about it. Being together is the biggest gift of all. Other things are secondary. We celebrate the life of each other. Don't try to become a potter and try to shape the other person's life as you want it. Leave that job to the Lord. Let Him shape each one of us through our life experiences and His guidance!

IV. The eldest son's reaction!

Now the party began, and there was music and dancing. At that time the eldest son walked in!

Luke 15:25-30.

25“Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

26“And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be.

27“And he said to him, ‘your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’

28“But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him.

29“But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;

30but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’

The eldest son was working in the field all day, and he returned to his house. He saw a big party going on in his house and it was arranged without his knowledge. It made him mad when he heard what the party was called for, because his prodigal brother, who lost all his wealth crawled back home for help. Also, when he heard that his favorite calf was slaughtered he hit the roof. The eldest son was so angry, he would not step into his house. The father had to come out and pacify the son. But the eldest son exploded! He pointed out the fact that he has served the father for so many years, and he had never disobeyed his father even once! Then he



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went onto point out an important point which triggered the height of his anger! The father was so stingy, he did not even give a young goat for eldest son's celebrations with his friends. But the father gave the best calf for his younger son who wasted away all his money on prostitutes!

A very valid anger! But the father pointed out an important truth!

Luke 15:31,32.

31“And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.

32‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”

Vs. 32 tells us clearly that the younger son will not get any more wealth. He was already given one third of father's share. Two third remaining they all go to the eldest brother. Why two third? The eldest person gets double portion according to Jewish law. So how will the younger brother be compensated? It will be just fringe benefits, and perhaps some monthly allowance. He cannot dream of obtaining any farm products or goats. So the eldest son was assured that everything would come to him, except for this calf! This calf was slaughtered out of exceeding joy! What is the reason for this extravagant celebration?

Father answered:

32‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”

We celebrate life, and we celebrate relationship, we celebrate over repentance of one sinner!

Conclusion:

We must go after the lost sheep that went astray accidentally or ignorantly.

But we must let the rebellious ones go and allow them to face the consequence. You may try to counsel him or her but it will not sink in.

Rebellious people learn their lessons only through suffering and hardships. They will not come to their senses until they hit bottom.

Prodigal son had only 3 choices: die slowly of starvation, or swallow his ego and crawl back to his father's house, or be too ashamed to go back to his father, and commit suicide, and end his life quickly.



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The prodigal son made the right choice. Crawling back to the people who could help him!

Father in this story represents our loving Heavenly Father God, and our Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus wants us to return to Him, and those who return, He will in no way cast them out!

Are we eating pig's food?

Come to Jesus and drink the living water and eat the bread of eternal life and stay in His mansion forever!

So

Let us welcome back those who leave the church and go. Let us restore back the status of children of God for them.

Pastor Daniel Israel