

The Prodigal Son

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Luke 15:11-32

Jesus often used parables in His teaching – using an everyday illustration to describe a spiritual truth. In this parable, Jesus described a man with two sons – one demanded and squandered his inheritance, the other faithfully served his father. When the prodigal son returned, the father and the other son had very different reactions. As we study this, we are going to attempt to identify the MAIN point. Once we do that, we will see how we can apply this in our lives.

Context

- This was one of three parables given on the same occasion – lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7); lost coin (Luke 15:8-10); lost/prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
- All three parables were in response to the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes (Luke 15:1-2) – the tax collectors and sinners were coming to Jesus and listening to Him; the Pharisees and scribes grumbled about this; they did not think Jesus should receive them

Basic Point

- This parable can basically be broken down into two parts – (1) the younger son leaves, squanders his inheritance, returns, and his father welcomes him; (2) the older son finds out that his brother returned and was welcomed, but he was jealous about it
- We often focus on the younger son – the one who was lost and returned (good reason for focusing on him given the parallel to the other two parables); yet we must recognize the older son who parallels the Pharisees and scribes in Jesus' audience
- The main point of the parable is that the restoration of the lost is a cause for rejoicing

Examination

- First, we need to look at the younger son – he asked for and received his inheritance, leaves, and loses it; at first, he did whatever he wanted to do (Luke 15:13); then he was in severe poverty (Luke 15:14-16); eventually, he “came to his senses” (Luke 15:17) and decided to return home; he knew it was better to be a servant there
- Second, we need to consider the father – he eagerly welcomed back his son and did not hold a grudge; he called for a celebration that the prodigal son had returned (Luke 15:22-24); this represents God and the joy He has when a sinner repents; same joy in heaven with the angels (Luke 15:7, 10)
- Third, we need to examine the older son – he learned of the celebration for his brother and was angry about it; he faithfully served his father, but was not celebrated for it

(Luke 15:29-30); he was focusing on himself rather than rejoicing over the salvation of someone else (Luke 15:31-32)

Application

- The Lord will let us leave if we choose to depart – Jesus gave His apostles this opportunity (John 6:66-68); He wants us to follow Him, but He will not force us to do so; we do have free will (cf. Joshua 24:15)
- Freedom from God is not what it seems – the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15); in reality, freedom from God is bondage to sin (Romans 6:20, 16); this is separation from Him (Isaiah 59:2)
- It is better to serve the Lord than to serve sin – the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23); by the grace of God, we can have eternal life (Romans 6:23); we can be “free indeed” (John 8:34-36)
- The Lord is eager to welcome back those who have strayed – He wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9); no matter what we have done in the past, God is willing and able to forgive (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15-16)
- We must be welcoming as well – when one repents, we must forgive and welcome him (2 Corinthians 2:6-8); we have all been in that same type of situation at some point (Titus 3:2-5), so be sympathetic and forgiving

Conclusion

- As long as the earth stands, God is willing to welcome home those who have strayed from Him
- Rather than seeking recognition for our faithfulness, we need to rejoice when the lost are restored