

The Prodigal Son

In Luke 15:11-32, Jesus uses a parable to emphasize the need for a lost soul to return to the heavenly Father. What is a parable? A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. He dealt with several important areas: 1) Rebellion – This parable starts with the young son rebelling against his father, 2) Riotous Living – The rebellious son is the one engaged in riotous living. This is why this parable is referenced mainly as “The Parable Of The Prodigal Son.” To be prodigal means to be extravagantly wasteful. This is what riotous living does. Throughout the Scriptures, the message is still the same, “Living in sin never satisfies. 3) Repentance – The rebellious son who was living riotously saw his mistake & repented. He stopped being rebellious & ceased living riotously. He came to himself & returned to the father. 4) Restoration – The son restored his relationship with his father. He never stopped being the father's son, but through his sin he separated himself from his father, moved out of his father's house, & lived according to his will & not the father's will. For this reason, he needed to be restored. The father did not run away, but it was the son who was the runaway & needed to come home. 5) Rejection – It is sad that a story of redemption ends with a scene of rejection. The son who stayed home became angry at the love shown by the father to his prodigal brother. Yet Jesus, still

teaches in this parable how rejoicing should be the inevitable result of one returning to Him. There are 6 points in this parable that would help us understand the message of the Savior.

The Selfish Son (Luke 15:11-12)

The story begins with a certain man who had two sons. Luke 15:11-24 talks about the first son. This son can be described as selfish. The word “selfish” is defined as “devoted to or caring only for oneself; concerned primarily with one's own interests, benefits, welfare, etc., regardless of others.” What made this son selfish was that he wanted his share of the inheritance now. He was only thinking about himself. He had no concern for his father, or his brother.

The Sinful Son (Luke 15:13-14)

This selfish son can easily be identified as the sinful son, for selfishness is sin (Philippians 2:3). We must have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). He was void of selfishness & it must not be named among us. Through selfishness, he began wasting his inheritance & quickly, he went from “waste” to “want.” As Christians, we must understand that if we sow in sin, then we will reap in sorrow (Galatians 6:7-8).

The Sorrowing Son (Luke 15:15-16)

Sin leads to sorrow, for the consequences are just & painful. As the parable continues, the once rich younger

son became a victim of sin & chance, for a famine hit the land (Ecclesiastes 9:11). He is now humbled through hunger. He had to work for a farmer & feed pigs. He became increasingly hungry, but no one gave him anything to eat. With his money gone, his friends were gone too. They were nowhere to be found to rescue him in his time of need (Proverbs 25:19).

The Sensible Son (Luke 15:17-19)

This part of the parable brings us hope in applying Proverbs 22:6. This young man was taught better & knew better. Yes, he did things his own way for a while, but having been taught the way, he had something to remember. The son came to himself, meaning that he came to his senses. He was hungry in the world, but never experienced hunger in his father's house. So, the son was resolved to leave the farmer's house & return to the father's house. Nevertheless, he had to resign within himself that he was no longer worthy to be called a son.

The Sympathy Shown (Luke 15:20-24)

The father of this young man showed great sympathy for his son. He could have scolded him, but the consequences of his riotous living were punishment enough. So, the father had compassion, for he ran to meet him, embraced him, & kissed him. The son confessed his sins before the father & the father expressed his concern by celebrating his son's return.

The Stubborn Son (Luke 15:25-32)

Luke 15:11-24 would have us believing that the older son was the total opposite of the younger son. After all, we hear nothing about selfishness, sin, or sorrow regarding him. He must have been sensible, for he did not follow his younger brother into carnality. Yet Luke 15:25-32 will describe in detail, the sin of stubbornness. The older brother heard rejoicing as he drew nigh unto the house. The people were rejoicing because the lost son has come home. However, the older brother did not know this, for this reason, he made a request of one of the servants. This servant gave the report. As a result of this news, the older son became bitter & Jealous. This is the same spirit of rebellion that was bound up in the younger brother when the parable began. The father lovingly explained the joy of reinstating a lost son. As Christians, we must get into the habit of rejoicing when a sinner repents, regardless of a person's past life. God has forgiven them & so should we. There is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10). If a person wastes his life, don't be critical, but show God's love & compassion toward that person in an effort to bring this soul to repentance (Romans 2:4).