

# Breaking Away From Father

by David Wilkerson

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*The story of the prodigal son teaches us about the heart-rending pain of a grieving Father, and the importance of love and relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 52:47

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 2:19, Hosea 14:1-2, Luke 15:20, John 4:23-24, Ephesians 2:1

**Topics:** "Repentance And Restoration", "Gods Loving Redemption"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to God after breaking away from Him, highlighting the grief caused to the Father by our departure and the joy that comes when we repent and return to Him. It delves into the deep love God has for us, the need for genuine repentance, and the transformation that occurs when we come back to Him from a place of spiritual death.

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## Transcript

Carmen, I sense the touch of God on your life. I've seen that two other times. My dear friend Dallas Holm who worked with me for years, of course Brother Swaggart, has that unique touch to minister to people, music, and my neighbor who's no longer with us, Keith Green, and what a marvelous ministry that is.

I'm delighted to be able to share this pulpit. My wife and I are here visiting with the Swaggarts, the ministry. I've always been attracted to the Jimmy Swaggart ministry and to him, his wife, and family personally because I believe he's become the conscience of America, the very conscience of America.

And God help us when his voice is no longer heard, God help us. Tomorrow night I want to share a prophecy with you that's been burning in my heart. It's a cry against the wickedness of American youth, a cry against the wickedness of American youth.

The Lord's been opening the book of Jonah and also Hosea and Micah. You know, when I'm finished here, I'm going home and shutting myself in, and I'm not coming out until I finish a message he's given me from Hosea called, set a trumpet to thy mouth. And if what I hear is from God, I tremble, I really tremble to publish it, and I tremble to think of what is coming.

Hosea prophesied in a time of great prosperity, the greatest prosperity in the history of Israel. Silver and gold was flourishing on the streets, and Hosea was walking the streets of Jerusalem. He was telling the people the time is coming soon when the most delicate woman, who won't even step outside for fear her

feet will get dirty, is going to eat her own children.

And they laughed at him, they mocked. And I feel, I really feel, and I'm going to share it tomorrow night, that the wrath of God is about to break forth, especially on the youth of the United States of America, the wicked youth. There are two streams, the spiritual youth that are rising with wings as eagles who are not fainting, they're not afraid.

In fact, the original says they're sprouting wings of eagles, and they're rising above the world, and they're shutting themselves in with Jesus, and they're getting out of the realm of man and into the realm of resurrection, and they're praying and weeping and seeking God. Believe me, there's a holy, marvelous thing happening in the United States with young men and women on fire for God, really seeking Him. But the great masses of young people are lost, lost.

And my prophecy tomorrow night, a cry against the wickedness of American youth. Tonight, I want to speak to you about breaking away from Father. Breaking away from Father.

I tremble when I think of the number of Christian young people who are here and watching, and in the United States and the world today, who once knew the Lord and are breaking away, backsliding, going back to their old ways. I want to tell you why you're doing it. And I hope and pray the Holy Spirit changes you, not touch you, but changes you.

Jesus, manifest your holy presence here tonight. Manifest your holy presence. Holy Spirit, you gave me this message.

I got it from the throne. It didn't come out of my heart or out of books. You said speak it, and you gave it to me in my secret closet, and you told me that there are young men and women that are breaking your heart because they're breaking away from you.

Lord, minister by your Holy Spirit now. Jesus, draw us to you. Let us know and understand how we're breaking your heart.

Oh, Jesus, let us feel your heart tonight. Let us look into your heart and see something of it. Let us feel the glow of the Holy Spirit like we've never felt it before.

Help us to get our eyes off of everything we've seen and heard that has vexed us. And help us, dear Lord Jesus, in this last hour, if we're ever going to get serious, to get serious now. Do it for us and to us in Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Once there was... I'm reading from Luke, the 15th chapter, 11th to 13th verse from Philip's translation. Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, father, give me my share of the property that's coming to me.

So he divided up his estate between the two of them. Before very long, the younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a distant land where he squandered his wealth in the wildest kind of extravagance. Now this is one of the most profound parables in all the Bible.

And countless sermons over many centuries have been preached about this story of the prodigal son, and all kinds of doctrines have been extrapolated right out of it. Almost every doctrinal view is traced back to this one single parable. My purpose tonight is not to find for you some deep, hidden truth in this story.

In fact, I see it simply as the story of a confused young man who broke away from his loving father. And when I began to look in this parable, the Lord said, I want to open it to you. I want to show you something about it.

The spirit really impressed upon me. If I can find out why this boy left his father, I can find out the reason why all the young people in America today are breaking away from father. The same reason he broke away is the very same reason the thousands of young people who walked with Jesus, who were touched by his hand, who were in the throne room in his presence, who knew him dearly, have walked away from and grieved his heart.

If I can find the key here, I can find it for you tonight. And I believe the Lord has shown it to me. The question that kept bothering me was, why would this boy want to leave a good home, a peaceful environment, and break away from a father who loved him so dearly? I thought I could understand if he broke away from a home that was split, if the home was chaotic, his father was brutal, and it beat him.

I couldn't understand how he could leave. Now, if he were married, it would be scriptural to leave and cling to his wife, but he wasn't married. And it's a tragedy when any father loses a son.

Jacob knew something about how a father feels when he loses a son. The Bible says, and this is when Joseph was taken from him, and they brought back that multicolored garment, and one of his oldest sons says, is this recognizable, do you know whose this is? And of course, they knew who it was. And the scripture said, Jacob tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins, and he mourned for his son many days.

And the second time, Joseph, Jacob was going to feel that same pain of a father who loses a son. This is when Joseph is now prime minister of Egypt, and his brothers, his ten brothers come for corn, and to make sin known to these men, and to know the terror of their Egypt. And listen to what the brother said, the lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

Now if you want to really know what Jesus is saying in this parable, hear what the word of the Lord said to Jacob's loving father heart. His life is bound up in the lad's life. His life is bound up in his boy's life.

If you take his boy, he'll die. Now, it's more than a story of a son breaking away from his father, and if that's all you think the prodigal son story is about, a boy who leaves his father, you've missed the point entirely. It's a heart-rending story of a grieving father's son that's headed for disaster.

You see, it's our story, it's yours and it's mine. You and I have been that prodigal so many times, breaking away from our father, and we can't seem to comprehend that his life is bound up in ours. We're never really aware of the pain we cause the heavenly father when we break away from him and backslide and grow cold.

We get away from him, and when we get away from him, we're so wrapped up in the consequences of it, in our hurts. We're so into our own emptiness, our unsatisfied hunger, our own despair, our own loneliness, we don't stop one moment to think of the grief we cause him. How many black backsliders do you know who stop to say, I wonder if I brought tears to his eyes? How many Christians living in sin who walked away from the father have ever said, I wonder if he's lonely for me? I wonder if he misses me? Have I left his heart aching because God does miss every one of his children who go astray? Israel became a prodigal nation.

You remember that, don't you? They broke away from this loving father, and they began to worship idols and strange gods. And just like the prodigal son, they end up in sorrow. They were grieved.

Misery swept through Israel, and God looked down on that misery, and he said, my soul grieves for the misery of Israel, my people. He missed them. He missed their fellowship.

He missed their communion. They were worshiping idols, and they're in grief, and he says, I miss them. I grieve over them.

Isaiah said of our blessed Savior, he is despised, and he's rejected of men. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him, and we all like sheep have gone astray. And there it is again.

There's the grief that we cause him. It's the hiding of our faces from him. No wonder the prophet said of him, he's a man of sorrows, and he's acquainted with grief, and we wound him by leaving him.

We turn everyone to our own way, and we hide our face from him. The prophet Isaiah said, we hid our face from him, and that's what grieved him. That's what caused his sorrow.

You see Jesus standing over Jerusalem. It's inhabited by his very own children who forsook him. He said, I came to my own, and my own received me not.

And still he weeps over them with outstretched arms, waiting to gather them under his wings like a mother hen gathers her chicks, still loving, still reaching, still missing them. And I can't even begin to get to the point where I tell you what I believe is the reasons he left his father, this prophet left his father, until first you stop for a moment and you picture that father standing before his son, weeping, hoping against hope that he would not go, loving him, and reaching out to that boy, wanting to embrace him and cry from the depths of his heart, son, don't go. I need you.

I love you. I can't bear the thought of you being away from me. Don't go.

That's the story. It's not just a boy running, it's a father grieving over the thought of it. I have four children, two boys and two girls.

When the two girls left for college, mother hurt worse. I hurt, but she hurt more. But I have two sons, both of them left for college, and I felt the grief when both Gary and Greg left for college.

When Gary left, he hadn't been gone ten minutes, and his little Chevrolet pulled out, said goodbye, and he's on his way to Evangel College. And I went in the room, and I felt the lostness, and I turned to Gwen and I said, honey, and I was crying like a baby, he's only been gone ten minutes, and I miss him. I miss him.

One of the worst days in my life, to see my boy leave. I know the grief of this father's heart, and I know the grief of mothers and fathers who write to me and say, my boy left home and he's on drugs. I can hardly stand to read those letters.

My wife and I read hundreds of letters, and we were reading the other day, and I said, honey, I can't take any more. The letters from parents who grieve over a son or daughter that's left them. Can you imagine the father's heart? And I can say to you, parents who have sons and daughters who have left and gone to some pig pen of this world, I want you to know your father knows what you feel.

He's experienced it, and he said, I'll not let go, and I take great comfort in the fact that my shepherd said, I'll seek them until I find them. Until means, I will do it. Glory be to God.

Now why did this prodigal son break away from his father? I've heard all kinds of explanations. Some have made him a type of covetous Christians who were only claiming their rights because he did said, give me everything I have coming to me. Give it to me.

But I don't think that's the real reason he left his father. Others suggest that maybe he had a wild streak in him. The world was alluring him.

He wanted to get out, live it up, and party, and have fun, and drink, and carouse with his friends. And it's true he did all of that. He threw money around like a drunken sailor.

He lived from party to party. He went wild, and he went crazy. He ended up broke and lonely.

But I still don't believe that's the real reason he left his father. It had to be more than that because he got sick after one fling. It wasn't a way of life with him.

You say, well, maybe that boy left his father because he wanted more freedom to do his own thing. He wanted to be on his own. There have been some powerful sermons preached on that very subject.

Preachers have said he wanted his independence. He wanted no strings, no authority, no parent telling him what to do. I've heard one preacher preach a powerful sermon on the fact that he thought his father's moral standards were too strict.

Father didn't approve of his friends. Maybe he was trying to get away from his father's continual lecturing, said, I don't want your religion pushed down on me anymore. I don't want you talking about church to me anymore.

But I still don't think that's the reason he left his father. Was he chasing some dream? Did he want to make something of himself without the shadow of his father over him? Was he looking for success and trying to start over, and he just wanted his father to give him what he wanted? A little help from his dad to start, because the Bible said he did go to a distant land and that kind of suggests he wanted to get as far away from his father and his influence as he could, maybe make it on his own. But I don't think that's it either.

Then you come down to the fact that maybe he's just a good for nothing, spoiled rich kid, a playboy who had no goal in his life. And after all, you know, the Bible said he went out right away and squandered it all. Every penny on dumb and foolish things, the Bible calls it wild extravagance.

And he sounds on the surface like he's just a happy-go-lucky playboy, and that may be true. He was probably very weak at the time, but that doesn't explain why he left his father, because there are a lot of good, moral, responsible type kids leaving their heavenly father. This may explain something about his character, but doesn't tell us why he left.

Now, I've looked at all these reasons, and I went over them with the Lord. Father, why did that boy leave a loving home? A father who loved him so much, who grieved at his going. Wild streak, love of pleasure, ungodly friends pulling him away, a lack of discipline, laziness, eyes full of lust.

These are all the reasons people tell me kids leave the Lord. Divided heart, rebellion against authority, ambition, spoiled, weak, lack of responsibility, stubbornness, anger, bitter confusion. The list goes on and

on.

Why did he go? All of those reasons show up after you leave. They may have been there latently, and all those things may show up after you leave the heavenly father. You may get bitter.

After you leave the heavenly father, you may get weak. You may go party. You may do all those things, but that doesn't explain why you left.

That only explains what you did after you left him. The real reason the prodigal broke away from his father was that he really didn't love him anymore. He didn't love him.

He wasn't aware of it, probably, and he wouldn't admit to it, but somehow, along the line, this boy lost his love and respect for his father, and I'm sure it hadn't been that way all the time because we know from the story that the father loved him dearly. He had not spoiled him because he had another brother working diligently in the field. The father must have produced some character.

How many times did this boy romp with his father when he was a little child? How many times did his father cry over him and take him in his loving arms and encourage and comfort him in his hurt? And if you were to stop that little boy one day romping in the field with his father, and you go up to him and say, son, you're going to grow up one day and break your father's heart. You're going to make him weep. You're going to turn away from him.

You're going to walk over his feelings. You're going to act as though you didn't even know him. You're going to treat him like he was a stranger.

You're going to walk out on him. You're going to take advantage of him. You're going to go your way as if he didn't exist.

That little boy would have cried. He would have leapt into his father's arms and said, never, not me. I love him too much.

He loves me too much. I'll never leave him. Get away from me.

That would have been the reaction immediately. That boy would have never believed you. How do I know that the root cause of his leaving was a lack or loss of love? Because my Bible said love has good manners and does not pursue its own selfish interests.

In other words, it doesn't behave selfishly at the expense of somebody else. But this boy was behaving selfishly. He had his own friends now thinking only of his own interests.

He wasn't even thinking of his father. He had no need to communicate to him anymore. He could walk with him when he was a child.

He could walk with him when he needed him. But now his mind had exposed all of that because his own dream is in his mind that the dream came because he lost his love for his father. You look at that cold, calculating boy and you say, how can you take his money? How can you pack it on your horse? And how can you walk away from him who loves you so much? And when I picture that boy getting on his horse and his mind stuck on something else, not even looking at his father and his father standing there tearfully grieved, not because he begrudged the money, but because he was going to lose communication with that boy.

And there's something in me wells up inside and I want to scream at that boy who's racing away. Boy, if you loved him, you couldn't do that to him. You couldn't just turn away and walk away like a stranger.

You've got to be dead inside. You have to have no feeling at all. Look at him.

Look at your father. You didn't even look at him. You're dead.

Now for the moment, don't think about what the boy's going to do when he gets down there in the far country, but ask yourself, why is he doing it? He's doing it because no longer cares what his father thinks. He's all wrapped up in his own world, his own needs, his own desires. Do you remember the story in the Old Testament of the bond servant? He was free after the seventh year to go anywhere he pleased, and he said, I'll not go.

And his master took him, bored his ear, and he wore that as a badge of pride and he went around and you know what his testimony was? I could not leave my master because I loved him. I couldn't leave him. I have this hole in my ear as a badge of my love.

I couldn't walk away. All my friends were walking away, but I couldn't walk away because I loved him. Why are Christian young people turning their backs on Jesus? Why are they going away from the presence to go back to the worldly crowd? Can you picture Carmen after his testimony, getting discouraged and walking out on Jesus? I thought of that when I was thinking what the Lord laid in my heart.

What a tragedy that would be for Carmen, but what a tragedy for the father. Jesus said, because sin shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold. Jesus said, if you love me, you'll obey me.

It's simply saying, if you love me, you'll stick with me. How heartbreaking to go on those flat rooftops in Brooklyn and see two teenage boys put three bags of heroin in their arms and go sit in the corner and cry. And I go sit by them and they said, David, we used to walk with Jesus.

We used to love him, but something's messed us up. To get down into those New York City parks and almost every third person selling something, some narcotic, and when they find out who I am, take me aside and say, my mother's a hallelujah woman. I used to go to church.

I'm Pentecostal background. I'm Baptist background. And I can hardly find any pusher that hasn't been to church, at least a Baptist or a Pentecostal background.

The pursuit of selfish desires. You see, young person, it's not the drug pusher. It's not any seducer.

It's not the spirit of this age. It's not your evil friends dragging you down. I used to preach that, but I don't anymore.

That's all happening after you leave him. But the real reason you broke away is that you lost your love for Jesus Christ and you couldn't do what you do now. If you had any love left for him, your love is dead.

Jesus said, he that's not with me is against me. And that means that you don't, you didn't walk out of me just because you didn't love me alone. You turned on me.

You didn't only quit loving me, you turned to be my enemy. And it's more than you just being for yourself. It's more than you're just being for the devil.

It's more than you're just being for your friends. You're against me. And I heard that in my spiritual mind the other day in prayer and it rang through my subconscious mind.

Oh God, the terror of that. Not only not to love you, walk away with my friends and say, I'm not hurting anybody. I'm doing this to myself.

I may do it to my friends, but no, he said, you're doing it to me. You're against me because you're not with me. You're against me.

There's no neutral ground. That's why I believe the Lord commanded, thou shall love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, all thy soul, and all thy might and strength, because he knew if you would do that, you would never leave him, never, because that would produce obedience. Obedience is the byproduct of love.

The Bible said, if any man loved the world, the love of the father is not in him. You show me any backslidden young person sitting here in this room or in any other place where I'm preaching, hearing my voice right now. You, I can look you right in the eye.

I can say the reason is that you have no more love for Jesus in your heart. You've replaced your love for God with the love of the world. You may not admit it, but you don't care for Jesus anymore.

You've become his enemy. I can tell you that on the authority of God's word. And your love for the world and for the things of the world will correspond directly with your loss of love for Jesus.

The more you begin to love the world and attach to the things of the world, it corresponds with your love for Jesus. You love the world more, your love for Jesus goes down until it's lost. Lust is not your problem, love is.

The loss of it. Why all the divorcing and cheating and fornicating in the house of God? The prophecy God's given me has to do with five trumpet sounds I'm to make. One is wardom and adultery in the pulpit.

The number one problem in America, adultery in the pulpit, a spirit of adultery. The building of temples, the refusing to lay down idols. I didn't know my television set was an idol until he told me.

And I said, Lord, just one little one in the back room. That's what Micah said, just a little idol in the back room. It almost cost Israel its life.

Why all the divorcing in the house of God? Why so much lust, so many Christians hooked on pornography? I don't know if Brother Swagger gets the confessions I get, and mostly from the ministry, of pornographic cassettes trading with one another. I don't know what you hear, but I hear the sound of a trumpet, I hear judgment about to break out in America. This is a wicked nation.

But why all the divorcing in the house of God, this lukewarmness, this coldness creeping in, and the fires of love dying around the country? There are tombstones in our churches everywhere that read, dead love, dead love! And what could be worse, what could be said worse than this of a Christian, he left the Lord and went his own way because his love for Christ died. And when a church writes to this ministry, or to our ministry, and I know Brother Swagger gets many letters like this, I know I do. My church is dead.

And my pastor is dead. Now, not all pastors are that way. Thank God there's a growing number that are awakening and weeping between the porch and the altar, and giving the Lord time and seeking His face.

But if that church is dead, it means that that pastor and most of the deacons and the congregation no longer have a red hot passion for Jesus. They don't pray anymore, they don't spend time with Jesus. They've lost that all-consuming love for Christ that drives out the world and everything that's in the world.

And unless someone sounds an alarm and wakes up that pastor, that pastor and that church is going to go the way of all flesh because that church is no longer held in the grip of a consuming love for Jesus. We've got to be held in these last days by nothing more or less than that consuming love for Jesus. That's what holds me.

The other prodigal leaves. I'm not as much interested in what he did out there as how he got back. And thank God there's a happy ending to the story of the boy who broke away from his father because it gives hope to every backslidden, cold, lukewarm Christian.

It says you can get back. You can come back into your father's loving arms and the grief you've caused him can be turned into joy. You can cause the father to rejoice.

And listen to the rest of the story. Here's some code words. Famine, hunger, no friend to help and to be and want.

Those are code words of a soul that's hit rock bottom. Those are code words of someone who's spent themselves dry and empty. Someone who's come to the end of the rope.

You'll never get back, teenager, young man, young woman. You'll never get back until you get sick of it all. Until these words mean something to you.

You know you've got a famine. There's hunger. You've got no friend to help.

You're sick of the pleasure. You're sick of the hopes and dreams that have vanished into thin air. And you've got to say, I've had it with this kind of living.

It's doing nothing for me. It's got me nothing but sadness and emptiness and loneliness. I want to get back to what I had.

And it means you've got to start thinking about father again. And that's exactly what he did. He started thinking father.

Father. Listen to him now. I will get up and go back to my father.

He didn't sit around moping like some theologian saying, Well, my father knows where I'm at. He can come and get me. If he loves me so much, I'll sit here.

I have no will. My will is bound. He can come and get me if he loves me.

No, he said, I've had enough. You see, get up and go back is not a complicated theology. Get up.

Go back. It's within your power to do what the Bible says. Get up.

Go back. It doesn't talk about the will. It doesn't talk about addiction or bondage.

It says get up. Go back. And I'll say to my father, I have sinned.

Now, that's old-fashioned repentance. And I want you to listen to what he said. I've sinned against father.

It's not that I've ruined myself. It's not that I've wasted myself. It's not that I've done all these terrible things to me.

It's not even that I've hurt other people. I hurt my father. And it's the first time you find it in that whole story.

Did he even consider the feelings of his father? You see, to me, repentance is not confessing all the bad things that you've done. It's not even confessing about all the people you've hurt. Confession is not how you messed up your life.

It's confessing to the grief that you've caused God. Confessing is saying, I've sinned against father. David, when he was caught in adultery and Nathan stuck his bony finger in his face and said, You're the man.

He said, I've sinned against the Lord. Every drug addict that's been saved in Teen Challenge, The first thing that happens when his eyes are open, he thinks of his mother. Very few of them have a father.

Like the 17-year-old boy, Danny. He came to me one day and he said, Brother Dave, look at me. I've been on drugs for five years.

He weighed about 95 pounds. And he said, I got up today. And he'd been saved about three weeks.

And he said, I got up today. I looked in the mirror at these hollow eyes and these sunken cheeks. And I know now why my mother's been crying every time she looks at me.

I didn't know it till now. Didn't know what I'd done to myself. And I said, son, that's still not confession.

It's not what you've done to yourself. It's what you've done to the father. You've sinned against God.

And that's the reason many of our young people are not making it with God. They come because they've been caught in their sin. Or it's caused them pain.

Or it's caused them despair. It's made them feel lonely. But that's not enough.

You'll never make it that way. You'll go right back to your sin. Only until you say, I know I've grieved God.

I've sinned against my father. Don't you dare think of his loving arms and a kiss on your neck until you can say that either. And you don't come back to him and say, well, I'll try it once again.

It ought to make a lot of people happy if I come back. Maybe I'll do my father a favor. I know he loves me.

No, it wasn't that at all. I see a lot of young people come that way. They say, well, I'll make my mother happy.

I'll make my dad happy. Especially preacher's kids. And my dad will be real happy.

I've heard so many. My dad ought to be real happy now I'm coming home. No, I've sinned against my father.

Until you can see your sin as hatred and abuse. I was reading this afternoon and it sent a chill down my spine when God was talking to David. David said, I've sinned against the Lord.

And God came back and said, David, you sinned because you despised me. And David had been fasting and praying. He'd been on his face for a week.

He'd been prophesying. He'd been crying. He's still the leader of the people.

But he said, you despise me in your heart. And the only reason you keep secret sin in your heart, you won't lay down that woman that's attached herself to you. You won't lay down that sin that God's told you to lay down.

It's because you despise the Lord in your heart and you don't even know it. You despise him. There was a time I preached like that.

I wasn't living in open adultery. But I allowed something in my life. And I stood and preached to multitudes.

And I've seen the thousands at the altar. And now I look back and I know that Jesus stood and wept. He cried over me.

He said, you fast and you pray. And yet you despise me in your heart because you haven't laid your sin down. You don't even know yet the grief you caused me.

It's only when I saw the terror of my sin and how I grieved my Father. It's not a sin against society. It's a sin against God.

It's impossible to sin against society. Society is sin. That boy has got to come back.

And so far, look what I've done to you. The grief I've caused you. You say, I don't know what that's all about.

Then get on your knees. Get alone. He'll show it to you.

The Holy Spirit will reveal it to you. It doesn't take long. The one thing we don't give him that he wants and that's our time.

You've got time for everything else, don't you? You've got time to sit for hours and watch that idol. You have hours and hours and you won't spend one hour shut in with God. Saying, Lord, show me how I've sinned against you.

Reveal the terror of my sin to me. So that I can stand before you with clean hands and a pure heart. It's only the man with the clean hands and the pure heart that gets the open heaven.

And I know when God cleaned up this preacher, the canopies opened to me. He walked away from his Father. His Father ran to him.

While he was still some distance off. And I want you to keep that in mind. Some distance off.

His Father saw him and his heart went out to him. And he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Brother Swaggett, my mind, I can't.

It's too fine. I can't understand God running. To me.

When I'm still some distance off. And I'm not all the way back. I've just started back.

And I know I'm not where I should be yet. But I know I've sinned against my Father. And I know that I once had it.

I knew what was there. And I've tasted of that love. And I get up and I go back.

And he's still off and he sees me in the distance. And God comes running. Incredible.

Let it sink in a minute. This story is about our Father. God.

I can't comprehend. He's still some distance off. It's mind boggling.

But I've got to accept what Jesus says about our Father here. Because Jesus told this story. He said, and he runs to you.

He falls all over you with joy. And he kisses you. While you're still not quite there.

I'm telling you now. And I promise you in the authority of God's Holy Word. And everything in this divine book.

And everything I know about my loving Father. You feel the slightest grief for your sin. You feel something rise in you right now.

And say, Brother Dave, I know what I've done has hurt him. And I have a sense that he misses me. And I know I miss him.

Don't tell me that God doesn't feel. Jesus was God in the flesh. And he cried at Lazarus too.

He's touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He wept over Israel. I serve a feeling, Father.

Oh yes, I do. If you don't believe that. You've never been in the depths of prayer and intercession.

You've never been close to his heart. And felt the heartbeat of God. If you don't believe he feels.

And the moment you take that move. And you step forward. Father, I've sinned.

And he sees you make that move. He'll run to you. He'll fall on your neck and kiss you.

And say, Welcome home. Now the best news is saved for the last in this story. You can come back from the dead.

You can come back from the dead. By the way, only the dead can rise. Only the dead rise.

Kill the fatted calf. And we're going to have a feast and a celebration for this my son. He was dead.

Doesn't say he was lost. The brother said he was lost. The father said he was dead.

This my son was dead. And he's alive again. Hallelujah.

Did you hear that you say, Well, I'm too far gone. I can't get back. I feel so dead.

I feel so dry. I feel so empty. I've gotten so far away.

The Bible said this my son was dead. But now he's alive. Hallelujah.

Christ loved us when we were dead. Ephesians 2.1 He loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. Now here's the part I like.

If you're leaving causes him grief. You're returning causes him to dance with joy and leap. Listen to what the scripture says.

And they began to be merry. You know, I know when this dear young man was singing and getting happy. Some dear high church people were saying.

Martin Luther would turn over in his grave. Well, I've studied the life of Martin Luther, one of my favorite subjects. And I thought I heard a belly laugh.

From Martin Luther, because I'll tell you something. He had a tremendous belly laugh. His table talks are full of cuddly humor.

They began to be married. The Bible said joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents. Glory to God.

You see, this is not only about the father's grief. It's about the father's joy. Isn't that an amazing thing that we can cause God to leap with joy.

You talk about moving the heart of God. Now, let me try to wrap it up here in just a moment. Proverbs speaks of a day that's coming.

A day of destruction for those who reject all his repeated calls. How many times has the Lord called you back? You have to leap to another story to hear the climax. It doesn't tell it all in this one story.

No one story does. I could describe a car to you and say a car has wheels. But wheels are not a car.

And that one parable is not the whole story. The Bible says one day God's going to laugh in the face of those who reject his repeated calls. I've called you and I've called you.

You refused. And because you did not choose the fear of the Lord. For the turning away of the simple will destroy them.

The turning away, the breaking away from father will destroy them. I was praying about this the past week. And I said, Lord, give me the final nail and drive it home.

Drive it home for me and for the young people. And here it is. Jeremiah 2.19 I've got an old Bible Brother Ravenhill gave me.

It's called Spirel. In the original Hebrew it's 100 years old. I think there are 20 left in the United States.

And one of the truest interpretations of Hebrew in the whole world. And this is Jeremiah 2.19. It's an evil and bitter thing. You're departing from Jehovah, your God.

And that the reverence of the Lord is not in you anymore. Saith the Lord. It's a horrible, bitter thing that you're doing and departing from the Lord.

And that the reverence of God is not in you anymore. I feel my spiritual bowels boiling in me tonight. For many years I've given invitations and told young people to just come down and find peace.

And to solve their problems and find comfort. I don't find that quite enough for me tonight. Tonight, I want the Holy Spirit and I can't convey it to you.

I can't make you feel that way. This is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. Where the Holy Spirit comes down, He shows you that this parable is Jesus talking about us.

He's talking about your heavenly Father and mine. He's talking about what you have done to Him. You're that boy that said, I'm leaving.

You broke away from Him. And you're sitting here tonight. And I don't care how well you sang tonight.

I don't care how much you cheer His name. What's happened in your heart? Have you really broken away from Him? And I'm talking about that communion you once had, that sweet communion. Where you shut down every friend.

You shut down everything. And you went to some little secret place. And you shut everything out.

And you said, oh Jesus, I want to know You. I want to know You till I know that I hear You speak to my heart. I want to know You like I once knew You as a child.

And I want to feel the grief I've caused You. And I want to get my eyes off myself. And my loneliness.

And folks, I'm sick and tired of man-centered gospel. Man-centered. It's all how-to books.

How to get rid of your loneliness. How to get rid of your fears. How to get rid of everything.

What about Him? What about Him? Oh Jesus, what about You? Lately, my ministry hasn't meant anything to me. Nor the world. Nor impressing You.

But to worship Him. We seek converts, Jesus said. My Father seeks worshipers.

To worship. To worship. We don't love Him.

We don't love Him, Jerry. We don't love Him anymore. We don't love Him anymore.

Oh God, we don't love You anymore. We're sad and we're grieved. We don't love You anymore.

Oh God. I don't care what happens to me. what these people think anymore, Lord.

I just need you. I want a life that's clean and pure and righteous and you are sane, oh God, to stand before you and say, well done, thou good and faithful servant. I want out of the realm of man and into the realm of the spirit, oh God, where I ministering life and not death.

Oh God, that the things of the world lose their charm and you will lure us into the wilderness and said, I'll show you a door of hope. I'll put a pile of stones on you and I'll bury the accursed thing and I'll bring you out into resurrection and life. Oh God.

God, I repent. I repent for my sins and the sins of your people. I've seen your holiness, Lord, and I'm afraid.

Oh, I've seen your holiness and I'm afraid, oh God. I don't care anymore, folks. Jesus is coming for a bride that's pure and we're not in the bride if there's sin.

If you broke away from father, there's sin in your life. Repent. That's all I'm going to say.

Get up and repent. Get up out of your seat and kneel and repent.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15393.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/9A9C3K5pwI0.mp4>

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