

# A Son or a Slave

by Ian Robson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living as a son in God's house, with a spirit of celebration and praise, rather than as a slave, with a spirit of anger and resentment.*

**Duration:** 46:16

**Scripture:** Luke 15:29, Romans 8:32, Hebrews 10:20, Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Sonship", "God's Grace"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living as a son or daughter in God's house, rather than as a slave, focusing on the need to intend well in our hearts, serve with love, and recognize the grace God gives to others. The speaker highlights the story of the prodigal son's older brother to illustrate the dangers of keeping a track record, maintaining a complaint register, and failing to realize the blessings of being with the Father and having all things freely given. The message urges listeners to choose to live as sons and daughters, celebrating God's love and grace.

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## Transcript

If we live as a son in God's house, we will always come with a spirit of celebration, spirit of praise, like we heard, this building is not God's house. This morning the word on my heart is for us to determine and decide, am I a son or a slave in God's house? It is possible that many are slaves in God's house and not sons and not daughters. I am calling my brothers and sisters, if we have been saved, if we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, we have the great privilege of being sons and daughters in God's house, not slaves.

But I am afraid that many of us live as slaves. And you will know, before you go out from here, whether you have been a son or a slave in God's house. And I trust that as God speaks to us, that we will determine in our hearts that as we leave this hall this morning, I am going to live as a son.

That is what God has intended for us. I want you to look at the word first in John chapter 8 and verse 35. John chapter 8. A few weeks back we spoke about continuing.

And this passage, that is not the word that I want you to look at, but this in its context. Jesus was saying to people who believed in him, if you continue, verse 31, if you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine. You know the truth and the truth will make you free.

But like all Adam's race, we tend to justify ourselves, and these people justify themselves also. They claim to be Abraham's descendants. And Jesus said there, in verse 34, Jesus answered them, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

And this is the word. The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son does remain forever.

So if the son makes you free, you will be free indeed. The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever.

And look at another word in Hebrews chapter 3. Hebrews chapter 3 in verse 8. I read a little before that in verse 5. It says, now Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimonial of those things which were to be spoken later. But Christ was faithful as a son over his house, whose house we are. If we hold fast our confidence, the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Moses was faithful in his house as a servant. Christ was faithful as a son. So it all depends, my brothers and sisters, whether I am following Moses or whether I am following Christ.

That's what will determine whether I am living as a slave in the father's house or living as a son. And the son, the slave does not remain in the house forever. The son does.

And with that in mind, I want you now to look at Luke chapter 15. We've heard many messages about the prodigal son. But very few messages about the older brother.

The prodigal son lived in the far country. He went, he wasted his father's estate, lived a loose life. The older brother remained in the father's house.

But I think he was worse off, as we see how the story ends. He was worse off than his younger brother, who went and lived a loose life. Does that mean that I must go and live a loose life? Does not mean that.

I want you to look at what is here in chapter 15. We read from verse 25. Last week at the outing, we talked about the younger son, the prodigal son.

We didn't see much about the older son. But I want you this morning to look at this boy, verse 25. Now his older son was in the field.

And when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 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. But he became angry. He was not willing to go in.

And his father came out and began pleading with him. But he answered and said to his father, look, for so many years I've been serving you. And I've never neglected a command of yours.

And yet you have never given me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him. And he said to him, the father said to him, son, you have always been with me.

And all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice for this brother of yours was dead and begun to live and was lost and has been found. And here we see the older son.

His immediate response when he heard that his younger brother had come back, the father not only received him gladly but was having a big party, it says there he became angry. Does it ring a bell when you think of two other brothers right in the beginning of Scripture where we are told that one of them became very angry? You know who they are, Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 verses 4 and 5. It says there that Cain became very angry because the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering. I want you to read that slowly.

If you go back there, look at the Scripture, it's good to see that. The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering. But for Cain and his offering, he had no regard.

Why? You heard of many sermons that because Cain did not bring blood, he did not bring, he did not slaughter a sheep. Abel tended sheep. He was a shepherd.

He brought the firstlings of his flock. Cain was a tiller of ground. He brought what he could.

And that was produced from the ground. Nothing wrong with the offering. Put aside, put out of your mind all the sermons you've heard that Cain did not bring blood.

Because if you read it carefully, it says God had regard for Abel and for his offering. But for Cain and his offering, he had no regard. Why is it? And it says that Cain, when he saw that, became very angry.

And the Lord said these words to him. It has always spoken to my heart. Many, many situations.

The Lord said to him, if you intend well, you also will be accepted. If you intend well. And God said to him, why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? If you intend well, you also will be accepted.

And that's the question that God asks us. Why are you angry? We read about the older brother here. It was not something that happened just on the spot.

It built up, built up over the years ever since his younger brother left the house. He was angry. Perhaps he thought, you know, he should have been having a good time also like his younger brother.

And he was angry, angry. It was only when his brother came back and the father received him gladly and had a celebration for him that the dam burst. It's not something, you know, that happened, you know, that was, I was provoked there.

It's a build up, my brothers and sisters. It's a build up over the years. If you intend well, God said to Cain, if the older brother intended well, he would have received his younger brother back gladly and he would have joined in the party.

He would have joined in the celebration. And that's the first thing I want that we think about this morning because that will determine, listen to me carefully, that will determine whether I'm living as a slave or a son in God's house. I may have been redeemed by the blood of the land.

I've repented of my sins at one time, been washed and cleansed, come into the family of God, but as time went on, allow things to, and it's always in relation to others, it doesn't happen just by ourselves, it's in relation to other people that the dam begins to fill up. If I don't do anything about it, if you intend well. My brothers and sisters, I can testify before God how many times God has had to speak to me.

When there was a moment to get provoked, to be jealous, to get into competition, that's the moment of temptation. That's when I need to watch. Something will build up here.

That's what happened with Cain. He saw how it went. We don't know how it was with both the brothers, but it was not good.

It was not good. And when something happened, when he saw that God accepted Abel, mind you, not his offering, not because he brought blood, but God had regard for Abel because God saw his heart. And he had no regard for Cain because God saw his heart.

And he saw inside his heart that he did not intend well. He could not stomach the fact that God accepted my brother. The older brother could not stomach the fact.

My father has got this waster back and having a celebration for him. And he became angry. I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, we can live a lifetime in the father's house as slaves.

We can live a lifetime like the older brother. Angry. And we can mask it.

But those who are godly, who are spiritually minded could see through that mask. We can force a smile and make believe that it's well. It's going well.

But inside my heart, there is a cancer. There is a cancer. And I am in the father's house living as a slave.

That is not God's will for any one of us sitting here this morning. If you are part of the family of God, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, it is not God's will that you live as a slave. We will see that.

What are we missing out? We will have such regrets in eternity. Look back there in Luke chapter 15. It says there, when he asked one of the slaves, he says, your brother has come.

Your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound. But he became angry and was not willing to go in him. His father came out and began pleading with him.

His father came out and began pleading with him. I would like you to see that picture. Use your imagination there.

We have seen pictures of the father receiving the younger son back. You have seen that beautiful picture. The father, you know, hugging his younger son.

So glad, tears running down his face. So glad to receive him back safe and sound. I want you to think of another picture.

I wish I could see a painting of that. The same open arms with the father coming to the older son. And it says that he pleaded with him.

You know, I looked up that word and it is the same word for the Holy Spirit. Pleaded with him. I like to imagine that.

The father came with his open arms pleading with him and saying, you know, that his brother had come back. But what was his response? This is the picture in my mind. This is the image in my mind.

He pushes his father away. Look. I want you to look at that there.

Verse 29. Look, not even dad or father. Look, for so many years I have been serving you.

I have never neglected the command of yours. And yet you have never given me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours, this son of yours came, not my brother, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.

And I, the image in my mind, how it must have broke the father's heart. Here was a son who lived with him all his life. That's what he tells him later.

Look, you know, when the father comes with open arms, he puts his, look, for so many years I have been serving you, never neglected the command of yours. And I, the picture in my mind, the image in my mind, he stomped away. I don't believe he went in and joined the celebration.

I have always tried to imagine how it went after that in that home. I hope you have used your imagination. How did it go? I would like to think that he would have said, Yes, dad, come on.

Let's have a good time. Let's celebrate. But my brothers and sisters, knowing what the flesh is like, and knowing what it is if we don't deal with that not intending well, it's very difficult to celebrate.

It's very difficult to be thankful. We will always be angry. And I believe that he went away angry.

And I don't know how it was in that home. Must have been a big strain between those two brothers. He would have been in his room, gone about doing his own thing.

And the younger brother would have been happy that his father received him back, if not as a servant. He was willing to live in the servant's quarters. That's what he came back for.

You know what we heard, what we were talking about last Sunday. He didn't come back because he was really sorry for the way he lived. He was hungry.

He wanted to eat what the pigs ate. You look at it there. And it says, No one gave him anything.

I like that. No one gave him anything. And that brought him to his senses.

And that's why we have said in this church that those who get offended, who go away with a bad attitude, and there are some very good, compassionate brothers and sisters who go giving them food parcels, patting them on the back, giving them a shoulder to cry on. They hinder God's purpose. No one gave him anything.

And that brought him to his senses. God doesn't delight in disciplining us. He doesn't delight with my brothers and sisters bringing us to the place to make us want to eat what the pigs eat.

He doesn't delight in it one bit. But it's only that he can bring us to our senses. And thankfully, this young, this man came to his senses.

Something happened, I believe, either on the way home or, you know, after his father received him. Surely, he would have come to tremendous repentance when the way that his father received him. And he'll never forget that hug and that embrace and the tears that screamed down his father's face.

He thought his father would really give it to him. That's our father in heaven. There's joy in heaven, Jesus said, over one sinner that repents.

When we come back in repentance, there's joy in heaven. And even if we are like the older brother, we come back in repentance and say, Lord, I am sorry. I am like this older brother.

I am a slave because we don't intend well. And the father pleaded with him and the Holy Spirit pleads with us. That's not good.

Why do you feel like that toward that sister? Why is it, why is it you get a little bit peeved inside? Why is it that you are so upset that you're saying you're going with that brother who's coming after you into the church, who is junior to you? The Holy Spirit pleads with us because he wants us to celebrate. We are part of God's family. And what Newton said earlier, that we come into God's house with a heart of celebration, with a heart of praise, not heaviness, because we intend well.

My dear brothers and sisters, I'm not preaching to you what I have not sought to put into practice in my own life. I have sought, by the grace of God, always to intend well. No matter what is said to me, no matter if I'm rebuked, if I'm corrected, and no matter what others say, no matter what my relatives say, no matter what my family members may say, I seek to intend well.

To see that it's always well in my heart. Because I want to be a son. I don't want to be a slave.

I want to be a son in the Father's house. I want to ask you this morning, my dear brothers and sisters, do you want to be a son? Do you want to be a daughter, sisters? You've been saved by the blood of the Lamb. Are you living as a son? Are you living as a daughter? Or are you a slave? You've got all these things in your heart.

Somebody didn't do this for you. Somebody didn't say this to you. You've got all this festering in your heart.

It only requires a situation with a damn verse. Just like it happened for this older brother. Just like it happened for Cain.

And no matter how good a mask we may have, it's same. We are angry. We are angry.

Because it goes well with others. It doesn't go so well with us. May God help us.

I want you to see this here so very clearly that the other thing, the second thing is that this son, he served as a slave and not as a son. I want you to see that in what we just read. And he answered and said to his father.

We saw that just now. Look, didn't even address him as dad, father. Look, for so many years I have been serving you for so many years I have been serving you.

That's true. That's true what he said. He was speaking the truth.

For so many years he was serving the father. But not as a son. As a slave.

I have never neglected a command of yours. He was speaking the truth. But as a slave.

Not as a son. Jesus wrote to the leader of the church of Ephesus. He said to him, he said I have something against you and your church.

You don't have time to look at it. I have a lot of good things. I know your deeds.

Your tests, those who are false apostles and you do this and you do that. But Jesus said I have something against you. You have left your first love.

Remember from where you have fallen and do the first first deeds. And return, repent. And I will receive you.

Otherwise I will remove the lamp stand from your midst. I need to ask myself what I do for the church, what I do for the Lord, whatever it is. Even if I put money in the box, if I do something for the church.

Maybe cleaning the toilets. Maybe sweeping the floor. Maybe helping in the conferences.

Why do I do it? Because I have to do it. Because I am part of this church. My name is on the telephone list.

Or I do it because I love the Lord. In your job, I am saying this to somebody. You may be having a tough time.

You have a tough boss. But do you see that like the scripture says you serve the Lord and not man. You are serving the Lord, not just your company, not just your boss.

And that you, no matter how tough it is, no matter how unreasonable your boss is, you are going to live as a son, even at work. You are a son, a son of a king. And no matter how tough the boss is to you, no matter how unreasonable, God can change his heart if you intend well.

But if you join all the others and bad mouth your boss and backbite and say all kinds of things, you don't intend well. You may be living, trying to live as a son in your home, but in the work spot, you are a slave. Is that true, my brothers and sisters? Even in the work spot, we can live as sons and daughters.

We don't have to be slaves. We don't, no matter how difficult somebody else may make it for us, I can live as a son. I am a son of God.

You are a daughter of God. And God will give you favor and God will give you grace. May take time, but he will if you decide, I am not going to be a slave.

The leader of the church of Ephesus, he started well. In the beginning, it was a labor of love. But further down the line, he began to do things because he had to do them out of compulsion, out of obligation and he left his first love and Jesus said, I have something against you, wake up.

Otherwise, I am going to remove the lampstand from your midst. The testimony that you have, that you are my servant, that you are a son, I will remove from your church, I will remove from your midst. Contrast that, I want you to see, with the Thessalonian church and what Paul writes there, in 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 3, I like that.

Paul says there, the end of that verse, he says, I am constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love. Constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love. This is what others will remember us for.

Our labor of love. I want to ask us, do we serve as a son? I serve because I love the Lord. Think of that, of that incident in the picture, in the Old Testament, of a slave who was served for seven years, he was, according to the law of Moses, he could be set free, he could go free, but he decides to stay because he

says, I love my master.

I love my master, I don't want to go out free. And there was a law that he was to be taken to the door post and his ear was pierced. Had a earring, perhaps, that identified him as a slave who loved his master.

Didn't want to go free. We are not slaves, my brothers and sisters. Can I, can we say to the Lord, I love you, Lord, that's why I do this, and I do this, and do this, whatever it is.

I'm not doing it because I'm forced to do it. I'm a son. Paul says to this church, I'm constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love.

What do you want others to remember you for? That you were some very wonderful, blessed person, but that you labored in love. May God give us that grace. Not be like this older brother, he says, I've never neglected a command of yours.

And all these years I've served you. But we can be like that, we can serve as slaves and not as sons. So the first thing, do I intend well? Do I want to be a slave or a son in God's house? And the third thing I want you to see is is my labor one of compulsion and obligation or is it a labor of love like we just saw? That's the question that we must ask ourselves.

Is my labor one of compulsion and obligation or is it a labor of love? God has put us on this earth. We don't divorce our secular life from our spiritual life. Many people think this is secular, this is spiritual.

You know that in when God sums up all things we don't have time to look at it. God is going to sum up everything, both in heaven and earth. It's not going to be secular and spiritual.

Everything will be in God. And we get a taste of that here on earth. That in the church if I'm part of the body of Christ, if I'm part of God's house, if I'm a son, if you're a daughter, we get a taste of that.

There's no such thing as secular and spiritual. I come to church on Sundays. I go on Wednesdays.

I read my Bible. I pray. And that's a spiritual thing to do.

That's a good thing. That's good to do it. But I have to go to work.

Oh, Monday morning. And oh, this terrible boss. And oh, these terrible people I have to work with.

And I'm miserable there. My dear brothers and sisters, God's will for you and for me. I've sought to do that even in my business.

That I will be a son. I'm not going to be a slave. Even if I do a job for somebody, I decide a long bag.

I'm not a slave. I will do it to his satisfaction. If he's not satisfied, I'll be willing to do it again and lose money and I've lost thousands.

But I was a son and then God makes it up. I don't calculate all those thousands I've lost. God just throws the things after us.

But if I see that I'm a son and I it's not drudgery. I know some of us can be having a difficult time. We have to work hard to support our families.

It's not easy today. Sometimes both have to work, husband and wife. But for my dear brothers and sisters, let's not divorce this spiritual and secular.

Sundays and Wednesdays are my prayer time and my Bible reading. And this is a drudgery. I hope it will change.

As I said, I hope we'll go out from here believing, trusting God. Lord, I'm going to be a son. And whatever it is in my work spot, whatever I face, I'm a son of God.

You're a daughter of God. And God will give you grace and God will give you favor. I've seen that happen in the worst situations.

I've seen clients get so upset with me. And one client who used such abusive language and their temptation, everything that rises up in you, is the old man. It would have been a different story.

But God said, I'm in control of that man's mouth, what he called you many years ago. And released him. Years later, when I meet him in a departmental store, a couple of years later, then he says, I'm sorry the way I spoke to you and what I called you.

I said, I forgave you long back. He owed me some money. That's why he got upset.

My dear brothers and sisters, we are called to be sons, not slaves. We are slaves, we will get angry. We will react the way anyone will react.

But we are sons of God. God has put his nature in us. We are not to be like this man.

I've never neglected a command of yours. I've always, I've served you for so many years. No, we serve because we love God.

That's what Jesus said. When somebody asked him, what is the first command? What's the most important commandment? He said, love God with all your heart and love your neighbors as yourself. But even under the old covenant, a man could still love God and obey all the laws that God had given.

It was possible. But the people of God didn't see it that way. And the difference I want you to see between a son and a slave.

You know, there's a word in Hebrews chapter 10. Thinking back of Luke 15, 29, you know, this son said, I've never neglected a command of yours. And that's true.

And he was right. He was living under the old covenant. That's how he lived in the father's house.

And Hebrews 10, 20, this is the word I want you to see. It says, anyone who sets aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. So, he was careful.

He didn't neglect any command of his father's. And under the old covenant, that's how it was. But that's how he lived.

He lived as a slave. He served as a slave, not as a son. Does it mean that a son could neglect the father's commands? Does it mean I don't care for God's commands, I can live as I like? It does not.

Certainly not. It does not mean that. It is the spirit in which I obey.

I obey as a son or I obey as a slave. There's a difference. The maid and the one who works for you in the home, they have a job to do.

They have to obey. But she obeys or he obeys as a slave. But we are sons and daughters.

And I am to serve in that spirit. I am to obey God's commands in that spirit. Because I'm a son and because you're a daughter, it doesn't mean I don't have to obey the commands of God.

People misunderstand that. We live as I like. Eat and drink and tomorrow we die.

That's how they interpreted what Paul preached about grace and faith. It's not that. The difference is that a son will not keep an obedience track record.

A slave keeps a track record. This older brother kept a track record. I've served you all these years.

He had a track record. I've never neglected a command of yours. He had a track record.

I don't know whether he wrote in his diary if there was one something like that existed that time. Do I keep a track record of my service to the Lord and to the church? I sacrificed this. I did this.

You know, what difficulties. We've had that. We've had problems.

People who have stormed out of the church. And they did. They sacrificed.

They went through a lot of difficulties. There were days we had to cook with firewood. Well, I keep that and say, you know, and that is what disturbs me when something goes wrong.

This is how I've served the church and they are not so thankful. They don't appreciate. We keep a track record of our service.

If you keep a track record, I want to tell you, my dear brother and sister, no matter how long, if you've been even 35 years, if I keep a track record that I was in this church 35 years ago when it started, I am a slave. No matter what I may portray to you, but thank God, I decided long back that I am not called to be a slave. That I am called to be a son.

Think of the story of the Pharisee and the publican, you know, who went into the temple to pray that Jesus spoke about. The Pharisee kept a track record. Lord, he's a God.

He was praying. We heard that in this church. He was praying.

He prayed to himself. God, I thank you that I am not like this publican. I fast twice a week.

I give tithes of all that I get. He had a track record. The publican had no track record.

He couldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven. He said, God, be merciful to me, you sinner. That is the difference, my brothers and sisters.

And like I said in the beginning, it's whether I am following Moses, you can understand the new covenant, you can have heard all the messages here, and you can be listening to those messages and listening to it. But you are following Moses. You follow the New Testament, the new covenant laws and commandments and all the wonderful, profound things we hear here.

You follow it. You follow Moses. You seek to obey as a slave.

And that's why you are not free. And that's why you can't celebrate it. That's why your countenance has fallen.

That's why you get angry. And you can maintain that anger in your heart for years like this man. We know the story about the Pharisee and the publican.

The Pharisee who kept a track record of the publican. He couldn't even lift his eyes to heaven. He said, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

We know whom God justified. Who went out with the celebration in his heart. The Pharisee would have went out, you know, ticking off all the things he did.

But this man says, the Bible says, he went out justifying. I hope you don't keep a track record of all the sacrifices, services that you have made for the Lord and for his church no matter how many years you've been here. And not only does this older son keep a track record, I want you to see.

He had a complaint register. You see that there? Not only a track record, I never neglected a command of yours. And you never gave me a young goat.

I'm not asking Father for a fatted calf. I'm not asking for that fat. But you didn't even bother to give me a young goat, a kid, that I could go and celebrate with my friends.

He had a complaint register. You have a complaint register, my brother, sister? No, I'm not asking for a birthday gift. But can't they say a few words, a few nice words to me? You know, you may smile at him, smile at him, but the things that come up in our hearts, when we see somebody honoured, when we see somebody appreciated, somebody who's coming to the church much after us, anything, I'm not wanting the fatted calf, just a kid.

The Father said, I like this. He said, all that is mine is yours. You could, son, not just one kid, you could have had a hundred barbecues if you wanted.

You could have had a barbecue every day, taken a kid and gone and celebrated with your friends. That's how we live, my brothers and sisters, when we are slaves. That is not God's will.

I hope you see, to live in the Father's house, my brothers and sisters, as a son, begin by intending well. And if you discover things in your heart this morning, ask God, right now, Lord, cleanse it from me. Cleanse it from my heart.

I don't intend well towards that person. Have a little jealousy there, a little spirit of competition. There is somebody who is coming after me and I see that, oh, he shares so wonderful on Wednesdays.

There is a grace upon him. There is an anointing. You feel a little disturbed inside, watch that.

There is a dam building up there and one day the dam will burst and like this older brother he became angry. And that's when it bursts. And God gives us time, my brothers and sisters.

What is our attitude to those who come into the church, who messed up and come back into the church? Do we look down on them, like this older brother? The ones who have dropped out, the ones who have

messed up, how do we receive them back? The ones perhaps who have back-bitten, spoken against the church and they repent and come back. There are a few people like that and it's gone gloriously well in their lives but I don't know what others who would have looked down on them with contempt and criticized them. And one more thing, very important.

How do you look at somebody to whom God has given grace? You heard me? How do I look at somebody to whom God has given grace? Do I recognize, like the apostles in Galatians 2, the grace that was given to Paul and Barnabas? I want to say that many of us don't recognize the grace that God has given and we are quick with our opinions, we are quick with our criticism, we may be careful with our mouths but we think, yeah, why is it, why is that brother, why is that sister given so much importance? Why is he given that responsibility? Recognize the grace that God gives to those who may have come in much later than you. I tell you it will go well. I can testify that before God.

It will go well. Even if they are not intelligent, if they are not gifted, recognize that God has given them grace and celebrate. He is my brother.

She is my sister. It is a cause to celebrate. Never mind.

I may be senior. I may be many years in the church and I have not received that grace but I can celebrate. Then you are a son, you are a daughter.

I like those words. I want to end with that. I think it is the most enduring words that we can ever read in scripture that reveals to us the heart of God.

What the father said to this older son. He said, son, you have always been with me. You have always been with me.

Jesus said in Hebrews chapter 13 verse 5. We don't have time to look at it. I will never, never leave you nor forsake you. How do we respond to that? The last words that he spoke to his disciples before he ascended into heaven.

The last words, Lord, I am with you always even to the end of the age. You are always with me. That is what the older brother missed out.

He kept a track record. He had a complaint register. He did not realize that.

You have always been with me. What did he do with all those years? What have I done with all the years that I have come to know Jesus as my savior? That I have been part of God's house, part of God's family. How has it been, my dear brother and sister? Oh, I pray to God that the spirit of God will impress this on our hearts, on our spirits this morning.

You have always been with me. And the other thing, all that is mine is yours. All that is mine is yours.

But he didn't realize that. And I don't know whether he realized it when he walked off from his father. When he shunned that embrace and went away, stomped out.

You have always been with me. All that is mine is yours. I believe the most enduring words in those words revealed to us the heart of God our father.

That's what Jesus was speaking. He came to reveal the father to us. I hope you see it there.

It has blessed my heart. Not just blessed my heart, it's challenged me to live as a son and not as a slave. Romans 8.32 we have often heard, he who did not spare his own son but delivered him up for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things.

Will you decide this morning that at least from today I'm going to live as a son, you're going to live as a daughter and that we can hear those words from our father in heaven, God our father, that Jesus revealed. You have always been with me and all that is mine is yours. What more my brothers and sisters, what more do you and I need for our short time on this earth.

May God help us. We walk out from this hall this morning deciding, determining, I'm going to be a son, not a slave, not going to be like that older brother. Throw away your track record, throw away your complaint register, come back like that prodigal came back to the father.

Let's pray. Father, bless these words to our hearts. We want to examine, I want to examine my own heart, Lord.

Forgive me for the times when I've lived as a slave, being calculated in my service. I want to be a son. I want to serve you because I love you.

Lord Jesus, you gave everything for us. In this short time on earth, I want to live for you, I want to serve you. I want to obey you because I love you, not because I have to.

Lord, help me, help us. Pour out your spirit upon us. Make us truly what you have called us to be, sons and daughters.

You said you'll be a father to us, you'll welcome us, and we will be sons and daughters. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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