

The Prodigal Son

by Welcome Detweiler

The parable of the prodigal son teaches us about the father's unconditional love and acceptance of his son, despite the son's mistakes and rebellion.

Duration: 35:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:11-32, Hebrews 11:25

Topics: "Prodigal Son"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a threefold parable spoken by Jesus for a specific reason. The parable involves a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a prodigal son. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking a step of faith and coming to Jesus for rest and salvation. The parable highlights the joy in heaven when a sinner repents and turns to Jesus. The speaker also mentions the absence of a mother in the prodigal son's home, using it as an opportunity to address the existence of God.

Transcript

Luke 15, verse 11. The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking, and he said, A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of good that calleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And many, not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put

a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the padded cap, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again.

He was lost, and is found, and they began to be merry. And God will add his blessing to the reading of this very familiar portion of the word of God. There is a possibility that some of you are already disappointed, and you will say, I know that story so well, and I've heard dozens of sermons on it, so I have wasted the morning, because I know the preacher can't tell me anything that I haven't heard regarding that story.

I don't know how to answer you, because when I'm going through consecutive studies, would you like me to skip certain portions, presuming that you know all about it? I know that the word of God is so wonderful that when I read those portions that are so very familiar, I stop at a certain place and I say, Now, look at that. Somebody put something in that verse that I never saw before. And that is the Spirit of God bringing things to our attention.

I must remind you again that this is a threefold parable that our Lord Jesus spoke for a definite reason. There were Pharisees watching the Lord Jesus eating with publicans and sinners, and they didn't think he should do that. They didn't think he was the Son of God and knew everything if he mingled with sinners.

And for that reason, our Lord Jesus Christ tells the parable of the lost sheep, first of all. Having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, he just forgets about those ninety and nine and goes out after that one that is lost. The second part is of that woman who had ten coins and lost one.

She forgets about the nine for the moment and is concerned about that one that is lost. In each case, after the thing that is lost is found, there is cause for rejoicing. And the comment that our Lord Jesus Christ makes is, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God in heaven over one sinner, one lost one that comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Well, the story isn't quite complete unless he gives us the third one to emphasize a certain truth. And this is the one that is best known, usually called the prodigal son. The first scene before us is a home, maybe a little different home than yours and maybe not.

I would think that this is probably a wealthy home, for there were servants in that home. It was a different home in this respect, there was no mother there. And in case there is an atheist in my meeting, you will enjoy this, that our Bible is full of mistakes and tries to impress upon us the fact that here are two boys that came into the world somehow without a mother.

Why? Because she isn't mentioned. And if she isn't mentioned, there couldn't have been a mother there. That's how atheists like to attack the Bible.

The very fact that she isn't mentioned, evidently there wasn't a mother. When the Lord Jesus tells a story, he doesn't give all the details. He doesn't tell us how many doors, how many windows were in the home.

The one thing he wants to get across is one particular message. He doesn't have to tell us if there was a mother there or if there were sisters in the home. He is concerned about two.

One son who was representing the sinners, the other one who was at home continually and satisfied, representing those self-righteous Pharisees. But the story wouldn't be complete without this one. And by the way, the other two are probably imaginary stories because he starts out by saying, what man of you, in verse 4, having in a hundred sheep? It's just an illustration, any of you that would have.

But when we come down to the last one, he said there was a certain man who had two sons. And I believe this was not an imaginary story, but some person that the Lord Jesus Christ knew who had two sons. One of the sons comes to the father and says, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.

As far as we can tell, as far as the Bible record is concerned, it was the custom or the tradition that when the parents died, the children received the possessions and that has been going on ever since. There was a certain period in the Old Testament where the firstborn received a double portion and the rest got their single portion. But in this particular case, no doubt, the goods were divided between the two that are mentioned.

At least this one comes and says, I would like to have the portion of goods that falls to me. Generally speaking, this was not done until the father or the mother or both of them were deceased. But the son was restless and evidently he was probably a teenager, I'm not sure.

But I know human nature and I know that in human nature, in those teen years, there is turmoil. The young child grows up and sees the world go on, the body develops and he sees a big world ahead of him and he says, someday I will be grown up. Someday I will not have to take orders from my parents.

Someday I will hear no no-no's. I can do as I please, I'm looking forward to that. Someday I will have the portion of goods that my parents earned and I will be a free person.

A restlessness. Some children don't go through this, are well satisfied. But many children get to that place where they feel they have been cheated.

Sometimes it's because of their schoolmates who on a Monday morning will gather and say, guess what I did over the weekend? Oh, I had a ball, I had a wonderful time. And that child who was raised perhaps under Christian standards says, I didn't have anything like that, it was just an ordinary weekend. The way they talk about it, the excitement that they express, I feel that perhaps if I had been born in a normal family, I too would be free to do what my classmates were doing on the weekend.

But I have been held in and I would like to break through that. I still respect my parents but I think perhaps they've been a little too strong in telling me that I must not do this and that. There comes that particular period when we come to that point when we say our parents are probably not quite balanced so far as handling young people.

Sometimes the child says they still treat me like a baby, like a five year old, like a six year old. I'm not. I'm as tall as Dad is and I'm as heavy as Mom is and they still treat me like a baby.

That's not fair. But then there are some homes that hardly deserve that name. Just a house where people meet to eat at different hours and really no decent circumstance is found.

When I think of the many teenagers that are running away from home continually, in some respects you can't blame them because of the terrible conditions. Child abuse perhaps in younger years that will never be forgotten and will never be forgiven and children are running away from home. Some of them have lovely circumstances but because of the influence of the rest they want to go.

Here he is, restless. I want to see that big world that offers me all of the toys and the pencils that I hear about. I would like to go.

If you happen to be a restless person remember that the Adam nature that you received is restless until it finds its peace and joy and satisfaction in Jesus Christ. In Isaiah chapter 57 I read that the wicked or the unsaved are like the troubled sea when it casts off dirt and mire. You've been at the seashore and you see those waves coming in and breaking at a certain point.

Have you ever seen that ocean when it was just like a pond? Never. Continually in a motion stirring up and I guess nature did it it was good that it has those tides and so on but the illustration is given the turmoil in the human heart is very much like that restless scene. Alright, we have to leave that scene.

It may fit you exactly. When our Lord Jesus Christ was here he also said, come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden or restless and I will give you rest. And Jesus Christ is the only one that can give rest to the restless ones.

Those who are saved in their teenage can thank the Lord because they may already have a power to overcome this tremendous pull of the world. When a young man leaves his home as did this man and if you had a camera and took a picture of that young man you would see him smiling you would see him stepping with springs in his heels he's going to have a great time he's got something to look forward to. The first person that meets him is the devil they have been looking for you for a long time you need to get out I've got something that will really thrill you just put your hand in mine and let's go and the devil is looking for young people who are in a condition like this one who says I want to get out I want to see that gay world.

The next thing or the next scene that we have is still a restless person I'm sure because in the book of Ecclesiastes you have King Solomon describing his youth days and how he longed for the things that the world had to offer and he tried a number of things that book is rather interesting in the life of King Solomon but after a while he tried everything that was to offer and he had to conclude by saying all is vanity and vexation of spirit a let down if you think you've been cheated as a teenager in a decent Christian home wait till you get out and try everything that the devil has to offer you've got a let down because after he has offered you everything you will be as miserable or more miserable because God so made your heart that nothing and all of the things of this world cannot give

you peace and satisfaction where is that worldly wise man who says I've turned my back on God I'm going to enjoy myself if you can find an honest man he will tell you I haven't arrived yet I still am searching for more and more and more and I still have a restless soul he spends his time in reckless living and some of the things that are told us in verse 30 of the chapter we didn't read that but as soon as thy son was come which had devoured thy living with harlots riotous living wasting trying to find everything turning his back upon God we are not told how long it took him to get to this place you can have your guess in the epistle to the Hebrews we are told that Moses one day came to the crossroads and he made a choice choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to

enjoy the pleasures of sin there are pleasures in sin we've got to admit it but you never read that expression without adding these words the pleasures of sin for a season for a season, well now how long is a season when we think of the four seasons of the year we call it three months I have my doubts if the word season there means three months I don't believe the young man, whatever his father gave to him would last him even three months it may have been just three weeks because when a man puts his hand in the devil's hand he gets very free handed come on friends, join me, the bill is on me have a good time he gets very liberal and it is soon gone there is a possibility that the father sat down and seriously

explained to him some of the things that would happen, not often that the father

would, the first time the boy comes and says give me what belongs to him, he reaches in his pocket or he goes into the safe and pulls it out and gives it to him I would like to give you some counsel I remember when I was your age I also had this impulse, I would like to go out and see the world, but I'm glad that I didn't because it's not quite as good as you think it is it looks good on the surface, but when you get out there you've got an awful lot done, and by the way when I give you the portion of goods when that's gone you're finished, don't come back for any more because you have it I don't think you're wise in making this choice but dad I want it, and he probably pestered him day after day, I want it, I want it dad I want it, I'll never be satisfied I'll be grouchy around here

until you give it to me and maybe he was a wise father who at a certain point said I think it'll be the only way he has to learn his lesson the hard way I'm going to give it to him and I'm going to show him what happened he has turned down all my advice I'm going to give it to him the story goes on to a scene when he comes to the end his last nickel or whatever they had is spent, absolutely broke he has come to his wit's end, the end of the road the end of the sinner's road is a hard road, he seems to come up right to a stone wall, there it is and he can't go any farther a dead end road, wit's end corner God often uses that experience to speak to people have that boy in Sunday school he's not interested, bring him into a preaching service he'll write in the hymn book or anything else but

he's not interested because he has tuned God out I don't believe in looking into the future I want now, eat, drink and be merry let the future take care of itself when I get there, I'll take care of it I never cross bridges until I get there, good philosophy I don't care about the future, I want now and he spent all and he came to the end of the road I've got to do something I've got to get employment and he finds someone who can use a man to take care of those smelly pigs and the story went to Pharisees and the lowest occupation that a Jew could have is to take care of pigs I guess it would be the equivalent of a parent having maybe two or three boys and they could say one is a doctor the other is a lawyer and the other one has another job what do you mean another job? well, he just has

another job what is he doing? he is an engineer in the sanitation department oh, you mean he's a garbage collector well, not exactly, no mothers don't tell that they just say he has another job because it is considered more or less the lowest part of the work a garbage collector, although I think they make pretty good money and the man who has that job is certainly better off than the man who doesn't have a job, but there he is at the bottom of the list and perhaps no income, you can go out there and you can help yourself to whatever the pigs have you can take care of them you at least can be out there in their company the man comes, the boy comes to the end of the road and he says now, I made a mistake I should never have gone but I did it and there is no way of me going back I haven't

got the nerve to go back after all the things that dad explained to me I just can't go back I'll have to see it through but then perhaps he realizes that perhaps my father would accept me if I did come back if I knew he would, if I knew he wouldn't scold me I would take a chance and I think there must have been a period of turmoil or should I, or shouldn't I what's going to happen to me if I don't what's going to happen to me if I do and he had to swallow his pride before he ever came to the conclusion I will arise and go I heard the story of another prodigal who ran away from home and the parents heard vertical of him and were disturbed because he just disappeared and he too got to the end of the road and he wondered if his parents would accept him if he came home he wrote a letter home

he said I'm sick and tired of my wayward life I would love to come home but I'm ashamed and I'm not sure if you would like me to come home but I'm going to be riding the train and I'm going to go past the house and that apple tree that's down right by the railroad tracks if you want me to come home I want you to tie a handkerchief a white handkerchief on one of the limbs of the tree and that way you can let me know if you want me to come home or not to come home he was anxious to see what will happen and as the train went in that direction he was watching for that apple tree will they accept me or will they not guess what happened the apple tree had a hundred white handkerchiefs tied to the limbs those parents were not going to say yes we'll accept you we want you a hundred times to come

home we will accept you alright this man the most important part of this story is when he came to the place where he said I will go I will arise and go that took nerve and by the way those of you who are saved may remember that while you were sitting under the gospel sound of the gospel in your unsaved days there was a bit of turmoil a space of time I should I know I should I just can't and you put it off but I know I should and you put it off and then at one point he said I'm going to do it regardless and that one step of faith I'm going to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and there may be an unsaved person in the audience this morning and you are saying I can line up with this man I am at my wits end I have found no satisfaction no peace the world has nothing to offer to me I

envy Christians who are happy who are on the way to heaven and I want that but I haven't got the nerve to admit that I'm a lost sinner I still want to claim that I have been a good person I haven't been as bad as some maybe you even add I've been baptized I have joined the church so really I but I'm lost when that realization ever grips you I'm lost I'm headed for hell the Bible says so even if I haven't gone to the same extent into sin as some others I'm lost and I need to be saved the devil puts up an awful fight when a sinner gets to that point don't you do it don't you do it you probably wouldn't get it you just make a mess an empty profession it wouldn't be real and you'll just make a fool out of yourself he's got dozens of arguments at that point but thank God every sinner gets so

miserable eventually just like this man I will arise and go I'm going to say to my father I have sinned against heaven he realizes not only have I hurt my father but I have broken God's laws living with harlots and broken all of God's standards I am a guilty sinner God has to deal with me and my father has to deal with me but I'm going to face it I have sinned against heaven and thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son the important part of this story is that salvation does not come as in the lost sheep the shepherd goes out and the sheep does absolutely nothing the shepherd just grabs that sheep and puts him on his shoulder and carries him home there is no human responsibility in that story in this one there is you're going to remain where you are until you make the choice I

will arise and go and by the way if you are unsaved you need do nothing to take you to hell nothing just stay where you are and never take that step I will use your will and simply say I will trust the Lord Jesus Christ who died for me on Calvary's cross he comes home and he is not sure what kind of reception he gets he isn't finished telling him the story before the father comes running out to meet him he too knows I have been accepted wholeheartedly and the father kisses him embraces him and here the love of God is expressed God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son he so loved the world that he will embrace every sinner some sinners just before they come to Christ will say but I committed one sin it's the blackest one of the whole bunch and I doubt if God will ever

forgive that one you're wrong he will there is not one sin in the whole calendar that cannot be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ you have that in first John the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all

sin this young man would have remained in his lost condition forever if he had not come to the place where he could say I am going to turn and go home it may be there's one in our meeting this morning and maybe you didn't come to this meeting to plan to be saved I don't know how earnest you are about that whether it's really important to you whether heaven and hell look almost alike and you don't care to which place you would go I hope not I hope you will realize that God is very honest in telling us those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be cleansed of their

sins and are bound for heaven and those who do not will have to go to hell and that is a horrible choice for you to make I trust that God has been speaking to you and you will realize there is joy after the Father embraces them the celebration begins and they began to be merry and they never stopped being merry this again is a story that starts with a dark beginning but ends with a glorious end and that is true of every person that comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior when people know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior they've got reason to be happy happy the rest of their lives I'm under the blood, I am forgiven all of my past has been buried and God will never bring it up I have a feeling there is someone in our meeting this morning and I have no idea who it is who can line up

with this young man and say, that's me all the way down the road I am at that point when I can't make up my mind shall I or shall I not shall I put it off should I know more about the Bible before I am saved or should I do it right now people who are saved have to get to that point where they can say, now I'm going to trust the Savior and by the way, right where you are without walking the aisle without doing one thing, you can bow your heart before God and say right now, right where I'm sitting I want to thank Jesus Christ for dying for me I will accept Him as my Lord and Savior He has promised to forgive my sins I want that I'm going to do it right now there are some who say, I don't quite understand it and that's why we give an invitation if you can't do it in your seat then maybe

there is a question or something that bothers you this has to be cleared away before I can do that but I want to and that's why I offer to help you when I dismiss this meeting when the rest go out, you find your way to the front and allow me to open the Bible and show you how this could be the most important the turning point in your whole life from sadness to gladness you will never know real happiness real gladness until you take that step of faith God is anxious that you should take it this morning the Holy Spirit is anxious, the Lord Jesus is anxious the angels in heaven will rejoice the moment you do it and perhaps you have relatives or friends even a husband or a wife that is anxious that you should do it this morning can you come up with a decent answer why you should not receive

this wonderful Savior who loves you, who died for you after doing all of that what else would you expect Him to do except just to say, will you come this is an extremely important moment for someone, and I hope God will enable you to say I'm going to do what this young man did I'm going to rise and go and trust the Savior Our gracious Father, we thank Thee for this wonderful story we thank Thee for many in this congregation who can line up with this man who once were lost, misery filled their days and are now happy on their way to heaven we ask Thy blessing on those that are not quite sure we pray Thou will bless them with Thy salvation and we pray they may be willing to take that step and not go another step in the other direction that will take them to a lost eternity we commit Thy word

to Thee, we ask Thy blessing upon it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen

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