

The Loving Father's Story  
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Text: Luke 15:20-24 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still 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 to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here 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.

Introduction:

A. We have been noticing the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

1. First we noticed the story of the younger brother and his sins.
2. Secondly we noticed the older brother and his sinful attitude.
3. This third and final lesson deals with the loving father.

B. Barclay made this observations from this parable:

It should never have been called the parable of the prodigal son, for the son is not the hero ... It should be called the parable of the loving father, for it tells us rather about a Father's love than a son's sin.

Body:

I. The Father had been watching for the prodigal (verses 20-24).

1. The Father had seen him a great way off.
  - a. Perhaps he recognized his son's walk
  - b. Maybe even he had been mistaken in times past.
2. He had probably been watching for his return since he had left.
3. He was constantly desirous of his son's return.
4. This is the heavenly Father's attitude toward us as sinners.

a. 2 Peter 3:9- "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

b. He loved us so much that he marked the way home. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

II. The Father's reaction (verses 21-24).

A. To the Younger Son- the Father ran to meet him.

1. Did not make the younger son grabble.
2. I wonder what the son thought as he sees his father running toward him.

B. The father fell on his neck and kissed him. Ever smelled someone who worked in the pig pen all day?

C. The Father elevated him to a position of honor- 22 -23 But the father said to his servants, `Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.

D. To the older brother:

1. V. 28 Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him . . .
2. Pleaded- to *call near*, that is, *invite*, *invoke* (by *consolation*): - beseech, call for, comfort, desire, exhort, entreat, pray.
3. Listen to his words- V. 31 And he said to him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

E. Thankfully the father wasn't showing justice, he was showing mercy.

1. Treated with honor even though he didn't deserve it.
2. This is why the older brother was having such a problem

F. God is the Father of mercies.

1. 2 Corinthians 1:3- "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,"

2. Psalms 33:22- "Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, Just as we hope in You."

G. What would be the reaction of some fathers? (throw him out, throw it up to him never let him forget, make his apologize and put on probation)

III. God the Father (sadly many have had terrible earthly fathers thus they view God poorly)

A. God has secured a way home for us Jn. 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

B. How do I know God loves me and wants me back? Psa. 103:13 As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.

C. Our father is full of Grace- 137 times grace is used in the Bible 119 in the New Testament

1. Psa. 84: 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

2. Rom. 5: 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

3. John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Conclusion: This parable teaches eternal truth, including:

A. God is willing to forgive prodigals and self-righteous bigots alike, provided that they will receive his mercies and enter the feast of the kingdom.

B. We should not be envious at any favors that God may be pleased to bestow on others, He has given "us" more than we deserve;

1. If, by his grace, he is pleased to endow others with more grace, or to give them greater talents, or to make them more useful, "we" have no cause to complain.

2. We should rejoice that he is pleased to give such mercies to any, and should praise him for his goodness, whether made to us or to other people.

C. If God is willing to receive sinners, if all holy beings rejoice, then how should Christians strive for their conversion, and seek for their return!

D. If God is willing to receive sinners "now," then all should at once return. Luke 15:7- "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."

E. There "will" be a time when he will not be willing to receive sinners.

1. The day of mercy will be ended
2. At that time there will be no escape from the misery and want of this wretched world

F. Let's close with the words of the Loving Father

1. "For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."
2. "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours . . ."