

The Older Brother's Story

Text: Luke 15:25-32

Introduction:

1. Last week we noticed the story of the Prodigal Son.
 - A. We summed up his life with 6 words.
 1. Willful
 2. Wandering
 3. Wasteful
 4. Wanting
 5. Wretched
 6. Welcome
 2. We pick up the parable this week looking at the older brother's story.
 3. Remember that Jesus is telling this parable as a rebuke to the cold hearted and self-righteous attitude of the scribes and Pharisees who despised Jesus because of His association with publicans, sinners and harlots.
- I. The Older Brother appears to have been envious of his brother. (you never gave me...)
 - A. He felt his brother was receiving something that he didn't receive.
 1. Gal. 5:21 tells the sins of the older brother 5:19 the sins of the younger.
 2. Rom. 1:28-31
 3. Rom. 13:13
 3. We should be very careful about passing judgment upon another - Matt. 7:1-2
 - B. Does not mean we can never make any kind of decision regarding the rightness or wrongness of an action or individual- Jn. 7:24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.
- II. He felt that the Father's love was earned by a record of service. (Lo these many years I have been serving you)
 - A. Our record of service does not merit God's love.
 1. Luke. 17:10 "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

2. Titus 3:5

3. Matt. 20:1-6 parable of the laborers.

B. We are saved by the grace of God not by our works. Eph. 2:8

C. This is the attitude that the Pharisees who thought that their good works brought salvation while publicans and sinners weren't good enough for salvation. Luke 18:9-12 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

D. Why does the father love His children? Because of merits or because they are his children?

III. The Older Brother was Proud and Haughty. (I never transgressed your commandments)

A. Many are proud and haughty, thinking that they do God a favor by serving Him.

B. Psa. 101:5

C. Prov. 16:18

IV. The Older Brother had been overcome by Bitterness (Article in the bulletin)

A. Eph. 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you

B. How to overcome Bitterness:

1. First, by obeying God's Word. Heb. 12:15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.

2. Second, by imitating the forgiving attitude of Jesus (Father forgive them...)

3. Third, by crowding out angry and festering thoughts, replacing them with praiseworthy and virtuous thoughts (Phil. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure,

whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.).

4. Fourth, by praying for those against whom you feel bitter: Luke 23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Everyone has problems. But, as John Henry Miller once said, "Circumstances and situations do color life, but you have been given the mind to choose what the color shall be."

Conclusion:

A. The younger brother certainly had sinned! But at least he had "come to himself" and realized his unworthiness before the father.

B. Luke 15:7 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.

C. May God give each of us the strength to overcome our wrong attitudes towards our brothers and sisters in Christ and learn to forgive and accept them back into the family..

D. May we serve God from a pure heart.