

LUKE I Parable of the Loving Father Text: Luke 15:11-32

You can return home — there is room at the Father's table —Bill Turner

1. It has been called the greatest short story ever told
 - a. It is the Most LOVED Parable of all time—and Most SHOCKING parable at the same time.
 - b. So Shocking that it could break up this family and the older brother may never get over it
 2. The Prodigal son represents all of us who were lost... The Father represents God and the older brother represents the scribes and pharisees...
 3. But the Prodigal son or the older brother are NOT the heroes here—the Father is!
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I. THE SELFISH SON (v.11–19)

A. THE SELFISHNESS OF SIN (v.11–13)

1. ‘Give me my inheritance early—I want it now—I’m leaving’
 - a) I Don’t Want Your Rules, I’m tired of your Lectures—I Just Want Your Money...
 - b) Do You REALIZE what an insult this was to a father in eastern culture?
 - c) In that culture it was saying to his father: *I wish you were dead!*
2. There was a man who spent 40 yrs in the Bible Lands of the Middle East, in Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, and he asked the people there about this sons attitude and how asked for his fathers money then wasted all...¹
 - a) Q: “What if a boy who had done these vile deeds and tried to return to his village? What would happen to him?”
 - b) **Answer:** they would **curse** him, **spit** on him, and **beat** him like the dog that he was. Because That is what this scoundrel deserves. (There would be consequences)
3. But He just wants to ‘*follow his heart*’ / *He has to follow his dreams*
 - a) He’s going to make a name for himself in the world!
 - b) He’s Working on Something Big! **NO...**
4. Sin is Exalting SELF above GOD—Higher, and More Important than God...

“The shamelessness of great pride: it lifts the crown from the cushion and places it upon its brow with its own hands.” (Dag Hammarskjöld)

 - a) Sin Exalts SELF... *My Kingdom Come, Not Thine, My will be done, not Thine*

B. THE EMPTINESS OF SIN (v.14–16) ***A Famine Always Follows a Life of Sin***

- Sin Promises HAPPINESS—But it Turns to HARDSHIP
- Sin Promises to FEEL GOOD—it turns to GUILT / SHAME
- Sin Promises a FUTURE—But it turns to EMPTINESS
- Sin Promises FREEDOM—But it turns to SLAVERY
- Sin Promises SUCCESS—But it turns to FAILURE
- Sin Promises LIFE—But it turns to DEATH

¹ Kenneth Bailey, Poet & Peasant / Through Peasant Eyes

Sin Promises You Everything—and then it Steals Your Soul

- a) But I can fix this.... I'll work my way out of his mess
- b) I'll earn the money back...
- c) But the only work he can find is Feeding Pigs with Slop that He even desires to Eat

C. THE LIE OF SIN:

“How many have stood upon those Bethel heights...

Age after age has poured forth its crowds of young hearts, to stand upon an exceeding high mountain, while all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; are spread before them. The Tempter Whispering—Just one small act, Just One Switch of Loyalty to Serving Satan rather than God — All This Will Be Yours...

And in Self-Confidence; Eager to do the Very Best for Themselves. Prepared to Pay any Price for Success—Looked towards the plains of Sodom from afar. And, like Lot, they Tried to Make Stones into Bread; They cast themselves down from the mountain side, for angels to catch; they knelt before the tempter, Only to find his promise broken, the Vision of Power an Illusion—While the Tempter Laughs & Disappears, Leaving you Standing Alone in the Midst of a Desolate Wilderness.” (Adapted F.B. Meyer)

D. THE REMEDY OF SIN (v.17-19)

1. **HONEST REALIZATION:** Hardship can be a catalyst for change
 - a) Instead of Hardening His Heart Even More—He Opened His Eyes to the Truth
2. **REPENTANCE:** to turn away from sin and turn back to God
3. **RETURN:** Repentance is more than remorse—it is ACTION to go to God
4. **CONFESSION:** He will confess his sin, apologize and ask for forgiveness

Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction can be the biggest step of your life!

Psalm 84:10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. / I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God / Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

II. THE LOVING FATHER (v.20–24)

A. HIS COMPASSION (v.20–21)

1. He had compassion on him... ran to Him... Hugged and Embraced him...
But Why? Patriarchs in the ancient near east did not run...
 - a) Especially for a rebellious son who brought shame on the Father and family
 - b) And everyone in the community knew what this shameful son did!
2. **And the Law of God was clear regarding sinful, rebellious sons...**
 - a) According to the Law—he should have been stoned to death. (Deut. 21:18–21)
 - b) And some in the community would be expecting it!
3. **But because the Father ran and embraced the son—If the neighbors had started to stone him, they would've hit the father who was embracing him!**
 - a) In a way—the Father was protecting Him from the penalty of the Law
 - b) He could've inflicted the penalty of the law on his son...

But He embraced his repentant son and forgave him

Had the boy been dealt with according to the Law—this would be a FUNERAL not a FEAST

B. HIS FORGIVENESS (v.22–24)

1. He Ran to Him and Had Compassion on Him—

this wasn't a reluctant grudging forgiveness—it was real from the Heart!

2. He ordered the servants to put the best robe on his son—

a robe of righteousness to cover his shame

3. He ordered the servants to put a ring on his son's finger—

a signet ring of full sonship (in ancient times like power of attorney)

4. He ordered the servants to put sandals on his son's feet—

Servants don't get the best robe, ring, or sandals—complete Forgiveness

5. He ordered the servants to kill the fatted calf—

He celebrated his son's return.

C. HIS JOY

1. The Father Shares His Joy — with a Feast at the Father's Table!

Had the boy been dealt with according to the Law, this would be a FUNERAL, not a FEAST.

2. 'This my son was Dead—but now he is alive!

He was Was Lost—but now is found!

3. What a Beautiful Picture of (Psalm 103:10–14)

III. THE ANGRY BROTHER (v.25–32)

A. HIS ATTITUDE

1. The older brother was a 'good person' in the WORST sense of the word

- a) He serves his father—That's the Story He Tells Himself—but he doesn't like it
- b) He serves his father—but resents Him at the same time—He is SELF-RIGHTEOUS

2. The insult of the younger brother is bad enough—it is shocking...

- a) He insulted his father, his family and he dragged their good name through the mud

3. but then the forgiveness of the Father is WORSE—even more shocking...

- a) Instead of Give the Son what He Deserved—which was Punishment
- b) The Father is going to give him what he DIDN'T deserve—FORGIVENESS!

4. This is so Insulting to the Older Brother—he may Never get over it!

B. HIS SEPARATION

1. His father left the banquet & guests to go out to plead with his son.

- a) But the angry son is so angry over the sins of his younger brother
—that he cannot see his own faults.

2. The Older Son Acts Like He's Perfect!

- a) He says he has served His Father All These Years
- b) And never once broken a commandment of his—as if he is perfect!
- c) Because when we compare ourselves to others than we think we are perfect!

3. He Refuses to Come in—He refuses to forgive...

- a) He Wants JUSTICE / His Brother Has to PAY
- b) Don't think you can waste your inheritance and then come back want some of mine!
- c) Not after what you did — This Should Be a FUNERAL—Not a FEAST

4. So he refuses to come into the Fathers House... or sit at the Father's table

- a) He Chooses to Stay Outside in the Dark and the Cold
- b) He refuses to accept his brother—and he is angry at his Father...

C. SO HOW DOES THIS PARABLE END?

1. Why Did Jesus Leave This Parable Unfinished?

- a) It Ends abruptly... Unresolved... What did the brother do?
- b) One gospel preacher said that if you keep reading the NT then you know...²

2. Even though the Father Pleaded w/ him—the older brother flew into a rage

- a) and he beat his father with a staff to a bloody pulp,
- b) and then whipped his back—lacerating His skin down to raw bone
- c) and then brought false charges against Him with lies from his corrupt friends
- d) and then brought him to the authorities to Murder Him in the most horrific method of execution ever devised by evil men.

3. All under the Guise of “the Law”

- a) When the Word became flesh—and God came to earth in Human Form
- b) This is exactly what the older son did to the Father.
- c) Jesus said—He who has seen me has seen the Father
- d) But their hearts were so hard that in killing Jesus they never saw the Father's love

4. The Penalty of Sin is Death—That's the Law!

- a) We deserved the full penalty of the law—death.
We deserved the wrath of God against sin...
- b) But rather than inflict the full penalty of the Law on Us—He Inflicted it on Himself!

5. He died in our place — He paid our penalty in full at the cross.

- a) He took His wrath against sin upon Himself
- b) to save us from the Terrible Wrath of God

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (Gal 3:13)

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

CONCLUSION:

It is the greatest story ever told / greatest price ever paid / greatest gift ever given!

It's Been Said: “You Can never Go Home Again...”

—But You Can Return Home to God Again!

—There is Room at the Father's Table!

—There is Joy and Celebration Over One Sinner who Repents!

—All Because of what Jesus did for you on the cross (1 John 3:1)

² The Prodigals, evangelist Chuck Durham, Westside Church of Christ