

THE PRODIGAL SON

Jesus told this story in response to a complaint. The Pharisees and scribes had complained that Jesus was associating with publicans and sinners. Luke, Chapter 15, Verses 11-32:

- 11 And he (Jesus) said, A certain man had two sons:
- 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
- 13 And 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.
- 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
- 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
- 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
- 17 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!
- 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
- 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
- 20 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.
- 21 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.
- 22 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:
- 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:
- 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

- 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.
- 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
- 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.
- 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.
- 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
- 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.
- 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.
- 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

#

There is a wealth of God's love and grace overflowing from every verse in this story; a wealth that should convince us that God's grace is more than sufficient to cover all our sin, no matter how awful that sin may be.

We could spend years studying this parable. We could spend years and years, and we would never exhaust the wealth of grace that is to be found there.

Today, I want to concentrate on just one verse; verse 17:

- 17 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!

"HE CAME TO HIMSELF." This statement may be applied to one who has just awakened out of a deep fainting spell. He had been unconscious of his true condition, and he had lost all power to deliver himself from it. But now he is coming to: returning to consciousness and action.

"HE CAME TO HIMSELF." This statement may also be applied to one

who is recovering from insanity. The prodigal son didn't know he was insane. In fact, he was doing just what many today think is the best way to live: enjoying life to its fullest. "You only live once," they say. "Grab the gusto while you can."

But that is a trap. It is the trap of hedonism: living solely for pleasure. And it is just as much a trap today as it was then. When the pleasure runs out, you have nothing left but a handful of dust, skattered to the winds.

But the prodigal son, coming to himself, painfully perceived the insanity from which he was escaping.

"HE CAME TO HIMSELF." This statement also used to be applied in the old world fables of enchantment: when a man was released from the magician's spell, he "came to himself." The classic legend of Circe, the enchantress, who transformed men into swine, is an example of this.

Surely this young man in Jesus' parable had been degraded in the same manner. He had lowered himself to the level of the pigs. He had lost several of the earmarks of humanity: the love for his kindred, the respect for right over wrong, and even the care for his own best interests. Instead, he was ready to root around in the mud for a husk of corn, just like any other pig!

But, here in verse 17, we see the prodigal returning to manhood, looking away from his sensual pleasures, and commencing a course of conduct more consistent with his birth and parentage.

Perhaps there are some here today who are still unconscious like this young man was. O God of Heaven, wake them up!

Maybe some here are morally insane just like this prodigal was for awhile. Father, grant them a recovery of their senses! Lord Jesus, put your cooling hand on them and say, as you did to the leper so long ago, "I will, be thou made whole."

Perhaps there are others who have allowed their animal passions to reign supreme. Father, deliver them from Satan's grasp and give them power to become Children of God!

#

It appears that when the prodigal came to himself, two facts became immediately clear to him:

1. There was plenty of everything in his father's house, and
2. He himself was starving to death.

If you are not yet saved, it is my prayer that these two spiritual facts will take hold of your hearts and minds, and not let you go until you recognize them for what they really are.

These are all important and pressing truths:

1. There are plenty of good things in God's house, and
2. Sinners need those things and can't get them anywhere else.

With God there is overflowing mercy. Nowhere else can grace be found or pardon gained. It is equally true that the sinner without God is perishing. He is perishing now; and he will perish forever! All that is worth having in his existence will be utterly destroyed, and he himself will only exist as a desolation, weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth against the opportunities he lost simply because he refused to see them.

How sad! Sinners refuse to admit that God is the only source of grace and mercy. They try to find satisfaction somewhere else. They try to slip away from the humbling fact of their own inability, and try to find some back door to happiness.

But the evidence is overwhelming and its importance is overpowering. If you are one of the saved here today... If you know my Lord Jesus... I earnestly plead with you who know how to approach the throne of God in faith: pray that He will now bring into captivity the unconverted hearts; that He will burden every unregenerate soul here with these two mighty truths:

1. There is abundant grace with God, and
2. They are totally helpless without Him.

#

The second truth may be easier to recognize here at Lake Cook Terrace than anywhere else. Each of you has to face a certain amount of helplessness every day. If that weren't true, you wouldn't be here.

But the first truth is hard. It is very hard! Especially here at Lake Cook Terrace. How many of you have never, ever, had the thought, "If God is so good, why doesn't He get me out of this place?"

I can't answer that. I don't know the mind of God, and I don't know why He allows some to suffer while others seem to get off scott free.

But, I can assure you that this is not all that there is. Heaven is waiting: life is short; eternity is long. I Corinthians 2:9 says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

#

Consider that promise. Consider the Father who made it. God is Love! His mercy endures forever! Look into His heart: He revealed His heart to you on Calvary. There He sacrificed His only begotten Son so that you could be with Him forever. He nailed Him to the cross for you. He did not spare His Son, but He wants to spare you!

If you end up lost and in Hell, it will not be because of any want of grace or mercy or wisdom or power in the Father. If you perish, it will not be because God is hard to move or unable to save. If you become a castaway, it will not be because the Eternal refused to hear your cries for pardon or rejected your faith in Him. If you starve, you starve because you choose to starve.

17 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!

The prodigal son was a fool. But He didn't remain a fool. He came to himself, and he went back home to his father. That's what I'm asking you to do today. If you have not yet come to Jesus for salvation, DO IT NOW! COME TO YOURSELF! START HEADING BACK HOME TOWARDS HEAVEN!

Have you heard this gospel message many times, but never let it affect you? Then let me remind you that we are all a mere breath away from dying. If you are still lost in sin, and your heart stopped beating right now, you would instantly find yourself in Hell with no hope of escape. Wake up! Come to yourself! Turn away from your sin and turn to Jesus: He will save you!

Do you feel that you're beyond hope already; that you're too far gone for God to do anything. Then let me tell you that Satan has whispered that lie in your ear because he wants you in Hell with him. But, in John 6:37, Jesus openly promises you, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

If you are mired down in sin, do what the prodigal son did. He came to himself. He turned away from his sin. He turned away from the mire of the pig sty. He turned away from the trap of hedonistic pleasures. And he turned towards his father and home.

That's what I'm asking you to do today! That's what Jesus is calling you to do today! Turn away from your sin! Turn away from the mire that is trying to hold you back! Turn away from the false pleasures that never satisfy! Turn to Jesus and he WILL save you.

Romans 10:9 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Hallelujah! Amen! -- END --