

Luke 15 – COMING BACK GRACIOUSLY

[prodigal] =

Luke 15:4-7 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15:8-10 – The Parable of the Lost Coin

Luke 15:11-16 - The Younger Brother _____ he repents

Luke 15:17-21 – The Younger Brother _____ he repents

Luke 15:20, 22-24 – The _____ with the Younger Brother

Luke 15:25-30 – The _____ Brother

Luke 15:31-32 – The _____ with the Elder Brother

To whom is the 3-part parable aimed? (see vv. 1-3)

Who else is rightly called “prodigal” in this story?

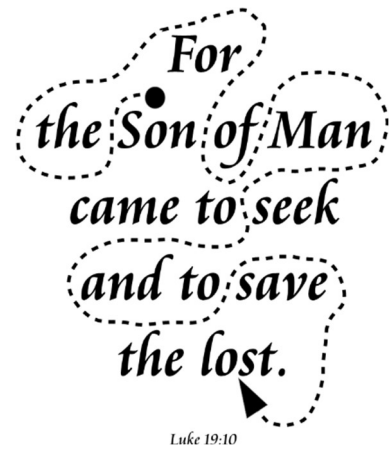
- see Timothy Keller’s *The Prodigal God*

“... sin is not just breaking the rules, it is putting yourself in the place of God as Savior, Lord, and Judge just as each son sought to displace the authority of the father in his own life.”
(Keller, p. 50)

“Everybody knows that the Christian gospel calls us away from the licentious-ness of younger brotherhood, but few realize that it also condemns moralistic elder brotherhood.”
(Keller, p. 76)

“... the main barrier between Pharisees and God is ‘not their sins, but their damnable good works.’”

“To truly become Christians we must also repent of the reasons we ever did anything right.”
(Keller, p. 87)



Who do we most resemble? (see back)

I AM LIKE THE . . .

YOUNGER BROTHER BEFORE HE REPENTED:

- I am disrespectful to God and those He has placed over me in authority (like my parents).
- I want the blessings God and others can give me, but I do not really want a relationship with them (so my prayers and conversations are mostly “Gimme” petitions).
- I am reckless in spending the resources entrusted to me for my immediate pleasure, with little or no thought of how God wants me to be a steward.

YOUNGER BROTHER AFTER HE REPENTED:

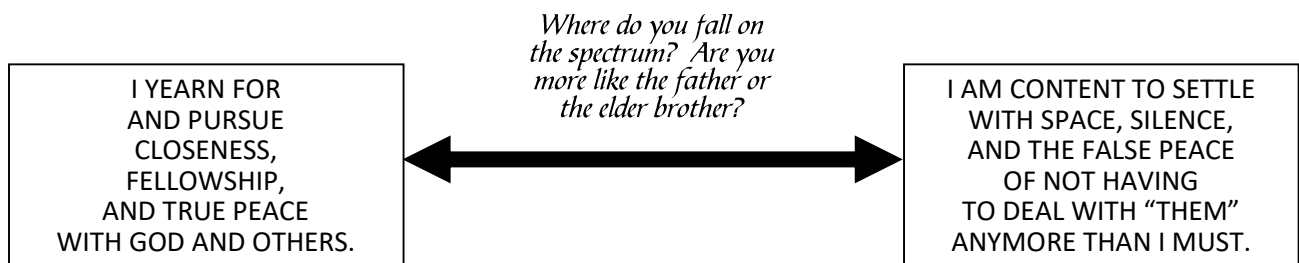
- I have hit bottom and realize the foolishness of seeking happiness apart from a relationship with God.
- I have been humbled and have humbled myself, going back to God and those I have wronged. I have admitted my sins and asked for forgiveness and a chance to make restitution when possible.
- I am utterly and overwhelmingly grateful to have been welcomed back by God and others, who have forgiven me. I joyfully have received the grace I could never deserve.

ELDER BROTHER:

- I have a hard heart that is disrespectful toward God for showing grace to people who have made foolish choices, squandering their opportunities.
- I am resentful and angry toward those who have hurt my future potential. I have the same bad feelings toward God and others who yearn for and celebrate their return to the family, like an apology makes it “all better.”
- I show no confidence in the Father’s decision to welcome “them.” I choose to manifest my disdain by separating myself from them, while loudly protesting my moral self-righteousness.
- I believe my good behavior and obedience should be enough to leverage God and others to give me blessings and rewards. I deserve them!
- I am ticked off that my faithful “slaving” for God and others has not been adequately rewarded. I am doing worse than I deserve! I am proud of my moral record and should be recognized for it!

FATHER:

- While I respect others’ choices, I yearn for them to be in fellowship with me. I am ready to appear foolish to welcome them back.
- I invite both those who are like the younger brother AND the elder brother to come back into a relationship with me. I so desire true peace and fellowship with the whole family, aching over division and celebrating unity.
- When someone seeks my forgiveness, I extend it freely and fully, even extravagantly and recklessly! I am not stingy nor withdrawing. I am joyful in welcoming them back.



FOR NEXT WEEK: “Parents: An Authority Under Authority” Read Deuteronomy 6; Ephesians 6:1-4; and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12