

Living with the Assurance That God Enjoys Us (Lk. 15)

I. JESUS REVEALED THE FATHER (LK. 15)

A. In Luke 15, Jesus taught three parables that have profound implications for us today. This chapter gives us one of the most significant revelations of the Father in the Scriptures. In these parables, Jesus revealed how the Father pursues, enjoys, shows mercy to, and feels affection for His people. The truth that He emphasized here is that the Father rejoices in forgiving and restoring His people (Lk. 15:4-7, 9-10, 20, 23, 30). He enjoys relationship with His people, even in their weakness.

¹⁸***“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity [sin]...because He delights in mercy.” (Mic. 7:18)***

²³***“...may know that You [the Father]...have loved them as You have loved Me. (Jn. 17:23)***

B. The way we view God’s heart toward us in our sin and weakness affects how we approach God. It determines whether we run *to* God or *from* God when we stumble. ***Spiritual principal:*** If we feel dirty (or condemned) before God, then we will live dirty. If we feel clean, then we live clean.

C. The greatest emotional need for all humans is *the assurance that they are enjoyed by God*, even in their weakness. We were all created with a longing to know that God delights in us and enjoys us.

D. We can draw near to God with confidence that He receives us with joy. Confidence in love has two expressions—that He loves us even in our weakness and that our weak love for Him moves Him.

¹⁹***Therefore...having boldness to enter the Holiest [God’s presence] by the blood of Jesus...***

²²***let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance [confidence] of faith... (Heb. 10:19-22)***

E. There is no condemnation before God for a believer, yet Satan accuses us continually before God. The enemy’s goal is for you to relate to the Father on the basis of your failure instead of His grace.

¹***There is...now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... (Rom. 8:1)***

¹⁰***...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night...(Rev. 12:10)***

F. The view of many is that *God is mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us*. One of the most important questions of our spiritual journey is: how does the Father feel when He looks at me? David described God’s heart as full of joy and pleasures (Ps. 16:11).

¹¹***In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forever. (Ps. 16:11)***

G. Jesus walked in the anointing of gladness more than any man in history (Heb. 1:9). His personality is filled with joy and gladness. Jesus’ leadership and His heart for His people flows from gladness.

⁹***God has anointed You [Jesus] with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Heb. 1:9)***

H. The Lord delights in and rejoices over His people (Deut. 30:9; Isa. 62:4; Jer. 32:41; Zeph. 3:17).

4...But you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...⁵as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isa. 62:4-5)

17“...He will rejoice over you with gladness...He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zeph. 3:17)

II. THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON (LK. 15:11-32): THE PRODIGAL SON

A. This parable shows us how the Father responds to a son who rebels against Him.

11Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me’...¹³...the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴But when he had spent all...” (Lk. 15:11-14)

B. The son repented (15:17) and prepared three statements to say to his father (15:18-19).

17When he came to himself [repentance], he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough...¹⁸I will...go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned...¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” (Lk. 15:17-19)

C. Jesus was describing how His Father responds when His people repent. This parable is not first about a son who lost his inheritance, but about a father who lost his son and then restored him. We pray, “Father, let us see what You see and feel what You feel when You look at my life.”

20“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.” (Lk. 15:20)

1. **Saw:** The father was earnestly watching for the return of his son.
2. **Compassion:** The father had tender feelings, not anger, toward the prodigal son.
3. **Ran:** The father had enthusiasm; it was unusual for a father to run to a rebellious son.
4. **Fell on his neck:** The father embraced him instead of being disgusted and angry.
5. **Kissed:** The father’s kiss signified the restoration of favor.

D. The son only mentioned two of the three statements that he had planned to say (15:18-19).

21The son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” ²²But the father said..., “Bring the best robe...” (Lk. 15:21-22)

E. The father interrupted his son (15:22), preventing him from asking to be a “hired servant” who earns what he receives. Seeking to earn God's love is the essence of dead religion and condemnation. The father gave the best robes, the family ring, shoes, and a feast to celebrate the return of his son.

22“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. ²³And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴...my son was dead and is alive again...’ And they began to be merry.” (Lk. 15:22-24)

1. **Best robe:** God provides us with the garments of salvation (Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:4).

2. **Ring:** Authority was entrusted to him to represent the family business.
 3. **Sandals:** Slaves did not have sandals; only family members received family privileges.
 4. **Fatted calf:** A calf was killed on special occasions to show honor to important guests.
 5. **Be merry:** The father rejoiced and enjoyed the prodigal on the day that he repented, even though he still had many areas in his life that needed to be changed.
- F. **Summary:** God feels gladness over His returning “prodigals,” and restores them to His favor. We see this in the way the father gave his son the best robe and family ring *on the very day he returned*.