

Attention:

There are two types of time found in the New Testament Bible. There is *Chronos*, which means **sequence or duration of time**; this is the root word for chronology. The second is *Kairos*, which means opportunity, season, or **appointed time**. *Kairos* refers to a **period of time**.

Need:

Many times, people often make premature decisions without a clear vision. Sin will take you far away, **promising freedom, but stealing years**. Eventually, time will help us to recognize the error of our ways. Jesus gives us a picture not only of a disobedient son, but also of a father who understood the value of time. **While the son wasted his time in rebellion, the father redeemed his time** through faithfulness. No matter how far the prodigal son had drifted from the fellowship of his father, he saw him coming home and had compassion on him. Never give up. With enough time, all things will work out to them that trust and believe God at His Word.

Background:

There is not a lot heard of about Jesus from the time he was twelve until about 30 years old. He has been baptized by John the Baptist, and now He is moved into His public ministry. Jesus was about 30 years old when he started preaching the Kingdom of God (**Luke 3:23**). After fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, Jesus had been tempted by the devil just before His public appearance to bring sinners home.

The **Son of God found Himself to be rejected by religious leaders and accepted by the outcasts** of the society. **Jesus sat down and ate with sinners and befriended the tax collectors, which was considered improper or unthinkable of His time**. He came preaching a message of hope to the hopeless and those marginalized. Jesus is on a journey reaching the lost, using analogies: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. When one sheep is lost, the shepherd is not content until he finds that one; he will not spend as much time with the 99, but he will seek after the lost one until he is home and will rejoice. Next, the woman who loses one coin is not at rest until she finds it and rejoices when found. Lastly, Jesus uses a wayward, disobedient son, who leaves home and goes out into the world. He is a lost son until he yields at the voice of the Lord and returns home. His father rejoices because that lost son has returned home. Such is the case when one lost sinner returns back to the house of God and in the comfort of His Savior.

The parable of the prodigal son is a beautiful depiction of returning home after a season of rebellion. These verses capture the heart of a father waiting for his wayward son to return, and they parallel our own spiritual journey of coming back to God after straying away. **Returning home spiritually means returning to God's heart.** This journey isn't just about physical return but a shift of the heart toward repentance and intimacy with God. This moment of realization is crucial in the journey of returning home. It speaks to the awakening of our need for God after trying to live independently. The prodigal son's realization parallels our spiritual return when we recognize that true fulfillment is found in God's presence.

1. Wasted Time (v. 13).

- a. The prodigal took all of his stuff, went far away, and wasted his life.
- b. King Saul grew tired waiting on God (1 Sam. 13:8-12).
- c. Sin will take you far away, promising freedom, but stealing years.
 - i. He was out of God's will.
- d. Don't let wild ambition rob your soul, while hunting wonderland.
 - i. *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Mark 8:36–37).

2. Hard Time (v. 14-16).

- a. A time when you are in need and you have none to help.
 - i. Out of resources—King Saul was out of help.
- b. When the believer walks away from God, the favor is gone (1 Tim. 4:1).
- c. Hard times can come from disobedience.
 - i. *"Good understanding giveth favour: But the way of transgressors is hard."* (Proverbs 13:15, KJV).
 - ii. *"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding Shall remain in the congregation of the dead."* (Proverbs 21:16, KJV).
- d. The prodigal realized the life he thought he wanted wasn't the life he needed.

3. Remembering the Time (v. 17-19).

- a. When the prodigal ran out of time, he came to his senses and remembered.
 - i. *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me"* (Psalm 139:7–10, NKJV).
 - ii. When in need, you'll look back and recall your joy in Christ.

- b. The prodigal son was **preparing an acceptance speech** to return home.
- c. Love can reach you, even a great way off.

4. Redeeming the Time (v. 20).

- a. His father saw him a great way off and ran to him with compassion.
 - i. **Redeem**: to buy back, restore what's lost or enslaved by paying a cost.
 - ii. *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; And take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; And uphold me with thy free spirit.”* (Psalm 51:10–12, KJV).
- b. **The son wasted his time but the father redeemed his time.**
- c. Love values restoration rather than revenge.
 - i. The pigpen became his classroom; the famine became his teacher; and hunger became his preacher.
- d. He didn't even finish his speech; he was forgiven when he saw him.