

The Parables of Jesus

in the Gospel of Luke (7)

Luke 15:11-25

DISCUSS

Recall a time when you did something that you thought you would get in big trouble for from school, work, friends, family, etc. You went to apologize and sought forgiveness, but everything ended up being okay. Share your experience and how you felt in the moment as you were going through it.

DISCOVER

I. Read Luke 15:11-25. Retell the story in your own words without looking at the verses.

Luke 15:11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.

Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.

Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.

Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.

Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.

Luke 15:16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.

Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!

Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.

Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.

Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,

Luke 15:24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.

Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing,

DEEPER

DIVE

II. Read the passage again, but this time skip vv. 14-19. Retell the story from the point of view of the father.

A. What difference does it make to consider this different viewpoint? Does it change your own perspective to consider the father's feelings and not only the son's?

B. Consider the significance of the steps that the father took to welcome his son home (vv. 22-23)?

1. Best robe—Isa. 61:10

I will rejoice greatly in Jehovah, / My soul will exult in my God; / For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, / He has wrapped me with the robe of righteousness; / I am like a bridegroom who wears the headdress of the priest, / And like a bride who adorns herself with her jewels.

2. Ring—Eph. 1:13

In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise

3. Sandals—John 13:5

Then He poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

4. Fattened calf—Isa. 53:7

He was oppressed, and it was He who was afflicted, / Yet He did not open His mouth; / Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter / And like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, / So He did not open His mouth.

C. Read the following excerpt.

With the robe, the ring, and the sandals the returned one was fully clothed and adorned. This means that he was fully justified and qualified and could be accepted into the father's house. Then the father told the slaves to bring the fattened calf and slaughter it for their enjoyment. Thus far, we see Christ as righteousness to justify a repentant sinner outwardly, the Spirit as the seal, and the power of God's salvation separating a repentant sinner from the world. Now we see that Christ is also the fattened calf to fill us with the divine life for our enjoyment. The father, the returned son, and all the others could enjoy feasting on this fattened calf. So "they began to be merry."

In this parable we see that God's salvation is of two aspects, the outward aspect and the inward aspect. The outward aspect is Christ as our righteousness to justify us, and the inward aspect is Christ as our life and life supply to satisfy us. After coming back to his father, the prodigal son enjoyed all the riches of God's provision in His salvation. He enjoyed Christ as his outward righteousness, he enjoyed the Spirit as the seal indicating that he belongs to the Father and that the Father and all His wealth belongs to him, he enjoyed the power of God's salvation separating him from the world, and he also enjoyed the inner Christ, the Christ who is his life and life supply. Therefore, he could become a very happy person. With his father he could eat and be merry. What a pleasant picture this is!

III. Memorize and pray over Luke 15:20, then recite it to one another.

And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.

DISCIPLE

A. Share with one another something you appreciate about the Father's love for us that you saw from this parable.

B. Share your personal testimony of coming back to the Father's house either when you were first saved or after being far away from God.

C. Share about someone in your heart that you would like to return to the Father's house. Pray for one another.