

LUKE 15:17-21 -- The Parable of the Lost Son

5/21/16 Sat Morn Prayer

Luke 15:17-21 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! [18] I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, [19] and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." [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. [21] And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

Context/Biblical Background –Three words summarize the message of Luke chapter 15: **lost, found, and rejoice**. This chapter makes it clear that there is one message of salvation: God welcomes and forgives repentant sinners. But these parables also **reveal that there are two aspects to this salvation**. **There is God's part**: the shepherd seeks the lost sheep, and the woman searches for the lost coin. **But there is also man's part in salvation, for the wayward son willingly repented and returned home**. To emphasize but one aspect is to give a false view of salvation, for **both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man must be considered**.

Repentance is an important key in this parable: There are four elements of repentance that are taught here:

- **Reflection.** "And when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare!" **Sin blinds and creates a sort of moral insanity**. But after plunging to the bottom, "I'm dying with hunger!" There is the memory of a better past in that exclamation. This same recalling of brighter hours flattens the spirit into the dust.
- **Resolution.** "I will arise and go to my father." He no sooner discerns his awful state, **than he determines to leave it**. We can imagine him prostrate, brooding in indecision or despair. But he will lie no longer in inaction. He protests, "I will arise," and he rises.
- **Recognition of Guilt.** He recognizes his situation and his guilt. He sees most clearly and distinctly the relation of sin towards God and towards himself. (1) The **relation of sin towards God**. "I have sinned against heaven." Evil **insults the purity and despises the love** of God. It destroys His moral order, and spurns the happiness and joy which He offers. (2) The **relation of sin towards himself**. "And am no more worthy," etc. His sense of despair is real and deep.
- **Return to God.** To turn from sin and to return to God! His was no empty vow.

Luke 15:17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'

- **But when he came to himself:** When the son came to himself, he didn't join a self-help group. He didn't seek to repair his inner child-like self. He didn't blame his friends, his boss, or the pigs. **He went back to his father.**

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

- **I will arise** - This is a common Hebrew expression, denoting "entering on a piece of business." It does not imply that he was "sitting," but that **he meant immediately to return**. This **should be the feeling of every sinner who is conscious** of his guilt and danger.
- **I will arise** - This is the resolution which at last, through divine grace, he came into: he determines to quit the country, and his companions. He had left his harlots, and his old course of living before, but was in the same country still. This a person may do, and still remain unregenerate: but **now he is leaving the country itself**, and his new acquaintance. **He is now determined** to be gone out of his fields and to leave his swine and husks;
- One good thing about the son was that **he did not let the grass grow under his feet**, but, as soon as he had made the resolution, **began to carry it into effect**. The problem many times, to go back to God is procrastination. Many would say, 'I will arise and go to my father to-morrow,' and lets all the to-morrows become yesterdays, and is sitting among the swine still.
- **and go to my father:** not to his old companions in debauchery and sin; nor to his elder brother, the Pharisees; he had made trial of both these to his cost already; nor to his father's servants, **but to his father himself**. To his father, although he had offended him, and treated him unkindly, and had provoked him, and dishonored him by his course of conduct. So the sinner. He has nowhere else to go but to "God." He has offended him, but he may trust in his kindness. If "God" does not save him he cannot be saved. There is no other being that has an arm strong enough to deliver from sin; and though it is painful for a man to go to one whom he has offended -

though he cannot go but with shame and confusion of face - **yet, unless the sinner is willing to go to “God” and confess his faults, he can never be saved.**

- **Father, I have sinned** - I have been wicked, dissipated, ungrateful, and rebellious.
“I have sinned.” This phrase appears eight times in Scripture...
“I have sinned,” said Pharaoh (Exodus 9:27); “I have sinned,” said Balaam (Numbers 22:34); “I have sinned,” said Saul (1 Samuel 15:24); “I have sinned,” said Judas (Matthew 27:4).
Each of these men acknowledged their sin, but none repented from it.
But there are four more....
“I have sinned,” said Job (Job 7:20); “I have sinned,” said Achan (Joshua 7:20); “I have sinned,” said David (2 Samuel 12:13); “I have sinned,” said the prodigal.
And each repented. It’s not enough just to say, “I have sinned.” True repentance takes place at the point the sinner, like the prodigal, changes direction and heads toward the Father.
- **Against heaven** - The word “heaven” here, as it is often elsewhere, is put for God. I have sinned against “God.” One evidence **of the genuineness of repentance** is the feeling **that our sins have been committed chiefly against “God.”** Commonly we think most of our offences as committed against “man;” but when the sinner sees the true character of his sins, he sees that they have been aimed chiefly against “God,” and that the sins against “man” are of little consequence compared with those against God.

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

- Though “no more worthy to be called his son,” the prodigal sinner is taught to claim the *defiled*, but *still existing* relationship, asking not to be made a servant, but *remaining a son* to be made “as a servant,” **willing to take the lowest place and do the meanest work.**
- **No more worthy ...** - “Such has been my conduct that I have been a disgrace to my father. I am not fit to be honored by being called the son of a man so kind and virtuous.” Confession of the facts. He sees his own pitiful plight and is humble.
- **Make me like one of your hired servants:** The son displays his complete sense of unworthiness and confession of sin - essentials to receive the forgiveness the father would give us. We must come to God willing to be total slaves, but by His love, He makes us total sons. The younger son had two petitions. *Father, give me (Luke 15:12)* a request that showed rebellion; this request made him poor and destitute. *Father, make me like one of your hired servants (Luke 15:19)* a **request that showed submission; this request made him rich and loved.**

SUMMARY:

- **Summarizing Jesus’ teaching to us** – We need to recognize our sin (to come to ourselves); That our sin is against God.
- **Resolve to turn from it and turn back, not just to promise to turn to God at some future point, but now!**
- **1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- **For loved ones and others, now in sin,** we need to pray that they too, would follow this teaching of Jesus – repent, confess and turn from the sin and turn back to God – who will abundantly pardon!

O Love that wilt not let me go, – George Matheson – Maranatha Singers

*O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be.*

*O light that foll’west all my way, I yield my flick’ring torch to thee; My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine’s blaze its day May brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee; I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain, That morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life’s glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red Life that shall endless be.*

Please Note: You may see or download any of the past notes and audio of the Prayer/Devotional Notes by going to: www.missioncalvary.com
When the screen comes up, scroll down on the left side to “Saturday Prayer Studies” Click on it and you’ll see studies of Bible Prayer/Devotions. If you have any trouble, email me at ptwente@gmail.com