

## Failure and Success of the Lost Son

Scripture Text: Luke 15:11-24

To any student of the Bible the parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most familiar.

- 1) Its sentiment, its scope, its message of a son's rebellion, a wasted life, and a father's love has been the source of inspiration for many lessons through the centuries.
- 2) The Theme: God's Attitude Toward the Lost.
- 3) The Main Lesson: God not only accepts penitent sinners, He earnestly seeks their salvation.

The Background to the Parable.

1) There are many precious words in our English language – "home" is one of them. Many this very hour are thinking of home:

- a. Some in prisons.
- b. Some in the military.
- c. Some in hospitals.
- d. Some in nursing homes.

2) The reason this parable was taught was because some were not glad to see some sinners come home.

- a. Luke 15:1-2.
- b. We need to have the same type of attitude toward the lost as God does.
- c. As God longs for, looks for, searches for, and puts forth effort for the lost – so must we.

Jesus, in this remarkable chapter of Luke, will show that there are basically three types of sinners:

- 1) The Parable of the Lost Sheep – Lost and didn't know how to get back.
- 2) The Parable of the Lost Coin – Lost and didn't know it.
- 3) The Parable of the Prodigal Son – Lost and knew how to get back.

### I. THE LOST SOUL

1. Luke 15:11-13.
2. The loss here is twofold:
  - 1) God loses man.
    - a. This grieves God.

b. John 3:16.

2) Man loses God.

a. Isaiah 59:1-2

b. God has provided man a way back (Mark 16:16).

3. The son was lost through self-will.

1) James 1:13-16.

2) Because of self-will, the son desired to go into a “far country.”

a. He wanted to see the world – he wanted to eat, drink, and be merry.

b. Self-will causes many today to waste their lives on the things of this world – they focus on the fleshly instead of the spiritual.

3) Because of self-will, the son made demands of his father.

a. Deuteronomy 21:17 states that the oldest son should receive a double portion. In this situation that means the oldest son would have received 2/3 of his father’s property and the youngest son 1/3.

b. The younger son made demands of his father – being disrespectful, and his father gave his son what he desired.

c. We must be careful what we ask for – God may give it to us.

4. This son is a sober reminder that self-will separates one from the Father.

## II. THE GRIEF OF SIN

1. Luke 15:14-16

2. There are horrible consequences to sin – a famine always follows a life of sin.

3. This son had given in to his lust and had jumped full blown into sin, and now he was reaping the consequences.

1) This is one of the most difficult lessons to get the souls of this world to see.

2) Gal. 6:7-8.

3) Sin had robbed this son of his:

a. Dignity

b. Self-respect

c. Good name

d. Purity

e. Good conscience

f. Happy home

4) Notice that he at this time was seeking help in “a far country” instead of seeking help from his father.

5) Today too many are seeking help from the wrong sources.

a. The divine is our only true source of help.

b. 2 Peter 1:3.

c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

4. This son is a vivid reminder of the consequences of sins.

### **III. THE JOURNEY BACK**

1. Luke 15:17-20a.

2. No one will ever repent until he comes to himself.

1) Reflection is needed on our part ... 2 Corinthians 13:5.

2) We must look honestly at ourselves ... James 1:22-25.

3) He remembered home and what he had left.

3. He admitted that he had sinned.

1) The three hardest words for man to say is “I have sinned.”

2) We can't help ourselves until we admit we have a need.

4. He realized his unworthiness.

1) This helped him realize the need for his father.

2) This will help us realize the need for our heavenly Father.

3) Matthew 5:3.

5. He took action.

1) Simply thinking about it will not get the job done.

2) Matthew 3:8

6. This sin is a wonderful reminder that we can come back to God.

### **IV. THE JOY OF RESTITUTION**

1. Luke 15:20-24.

2. God will meet us halfway.

- 1) Notice that the son's father "ran" to meet him.
  - 2) In restitution there is God's part (grace) and our part (obedience/repentance)
  - 3) We can be assured that our heavenly Father will do the same.
3. God is a God of compassion.
- 1) God continually looks for His children to come home. He is hurt by the separation.
  - 2) Romans 5:8-9
4. God forgives when we repent.
- 1) The slate is wiped clean.
  - 2) We are not on probation.
  - 3) We are placed where we were when we left.
5. This son is a beautiful reminder that God forgives the penitent.

1. There are many valuable lessons to be learned from this parable:

- 1) God seeks and receives sinners.
- 2) Man is responsible for his lost condition.
- 3) A lost man can come to God if he so desires.
- 4) Separation from God brings suffering.
- 5) Life apart from God is a waste.
- 6) We must be poor in spirit to return to God.
- 7) A good family can have children that go astray.
- 8) Material things can blind us.
- 9) Foolish decisions while we are young can cause sorrows and trouble.
- 10) The allurements of the world will cause many to be lost.
- 11) There are many "hog-pens" in this life we need to avoid.

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