

## Prodigal Pigs

Scripture Text: Luke 15:11-32

“One of the World’s Best loved stories” – George W. DeHoff

### **1. Background:**

Luke 15 – “the lost chapter”

Audience: v. 1-3 – tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, scribes – often excluded from the religious community

The value of the lost item increases with each story Jesus told.

Lost sheep – v. 4-7 – shepherds often considered members of an unclean profession by audience

4 100 sheep – average size of a flock, often multiple shepherds together with multiple flocks, easier to leave this way

Literally: “He keeps on going until success ultimately comes.”

5 Carry a lamb across shoulders with their feet crossed across chest, cf. Ps. 28:9

7 Great contrast to grumbling audience.

Lost coin – v. 8-10 – Pharisees generally didn’t care about women.

8 Coins: probably dowery money -Greek: ketubah; 10 days wage – probably a poor father’s gift marrying into a poor family

Floor not a solid slab but comprised of individual stones with a gap between them; coins and fragments of pottery could easily be lost in these cracks. Sweeping would rattle the coin.

Archaeologists have been able to date dwelling places to what coins were found in these cracks.

10 Literally: “the Joy of God Himself”

### **2. Parable: “The Lost Son/Sons”**

11 Younger son presumably no older than 18 (unmarried) – had little experience with money.

12 Younger son insults father – Num. 27:8-11; 36:7-9

Dividing inheritance – Deut. 21:17

Not unheard of but not unusual to divide inheritance before father’s death

Could go ahead and assign what would go to each recipient before death.

Older gets 2/3, younger gets 1/3

Sin begins in the heart – James 1:15

Basically saying "I wish you were dead!"

- 13 One's use of wealth corresponds to the object of one's worship

"Not many days" – downward course is rapid.

"Wasted" – Greek term for winnowing grain, almost throwing it up and letting wind carry away excess. Son scattered his property as opposed to gathering wealth – cf. Matt. 25:24

"Gathered" – apparently converted all land, cattle, etc. Into cash to waste

Father able to give before his death but still able to live on the property until his death.

No intentions to return.

No real way of knowing his real intentions or if the harlots (v. 30) was just his brother being angry.

- 14 "There is always a famine when one is far from God." – George W. DeHoff

"Providence brought a famine just when all was spent." – Alfred Plummer

Twofold evil: poverty & famine

Severe famines common (Joseph's dreams) but he kept nothing in reserve

- 15 Later Jewish tradition would've made this son to "be cursed"

Unlikely not even want to approach the synagogue for help

Son hired himself out to feed pigs – should have been repugnant to him

Joined: Greek: was glued to

Feeding swine – unclean – Lev. 11:7 – unspeakable degradation for a Jew

#### **Clean vs. Unclean {Leviticus 11}**

1. Land [v. 3-8] – split hoof, chews cud = clean (cow); split hoof, doesn't chew cud = unclean (pigs specifically mentioned in v. 7)

2. Water [v. 9-12] – has fins & scales = clean; has fins but no scales = unclean

3. Air [v. 13-19] – see verses for specific list of unclean birds

4. Insects [v. 20-23] – four walking legs, jointed jumping legs = clean

5. Conclusion: instituted by God to:

◇ Teach them to be obedient

◇ Keep them separated from the Gentiles

- 16 Animals ate carob pods raw – humans ate them toasted (sometimes only in times of famine)

Seed castings of a tree used as food for cattle, pigs, sometimes the poor.

Had a "sweetish taste" – coarse, locust-like bean with a certain sugar content.

Seeds are strangely uniform in size and weight, and they were used as the measure of a "Carat" by gem merchants. The weight of one seed equaling one carob.

- Still sold in Manhattan.
- All worldly friends deserted him.
- 17 Realized his sin was against God Himself
- Hired: either slaves rented for hire or free servants working for pay – Father was well to do
- Repentance begins in self-reflection – Psalm 119:59
- Repent – Metanoeo- used 9x in Luke [10:13, 11:32, 13:3, 13:5, 15:7, 15:10, 16:30, 17:3, 17:4] 37 in NT.
- 18 Heaven surrogate name for God – cf. Daniel 4:26
- 20 Afar off – habitually looking for him
- Running considered to be undignified for an older person – especially for a wealthy man
- The Father shows: [opposite of expected]
1. Compassion
  2. Love (arms around him, kissed his neck) – Kissed: Greek: kissed him again and again
  3. Celebration (feast)
  4. Joyful restoration of status
- 21 Unable to complete his rehearsed speech.
- 22 Best robe – long flowing robe, reaching the feet, worn by persons of rank
- Robe and ring restores position as a son – Esther 3:10; 8:2; Gen. 41:42
- Literally: “a robe the first,” the kind worn by kings (Mark 16:5, Luke 22:46) – might have been the father’s robe
- Shoes – slaves were often barefoot.
- Unlike the father, the older brother:
1. Was surprised at his brother’s return
  2. Offended and jealous at father’s celebration
  3. Became angry at the father’s forgiving love
  4. Declared his own self-righteousness
  5. Focused on his brother’s sinfulness rather than his newfound repentance.
- 23 Fattened calf – reserved for special occasions (son turning 13 or getting married – this might have been the one the father was saving for his son’s marriage) – Gen. 18:7; Amos 6:4
- Fattened calf would have fed the entire village – Greek: “to feed with wheat”
- 24 Assumed to be dead, now alive – a picture of a member of membership in God’s Kingdom
- Literally: “Come back to life”
- 25 Younger son represents tax collectors & sinners.

Older son represents Pharisees.

V. 1-3 – both groups listening to Jesus

27 Safe & sound – spiritual & physical safety

28 Anger mirrors Pharisees and Sadducees – he flew into a rage just the way they did when they saw Jesus eating with sinners

Angers his father.

Young goat – of less value than fatted calf

29 “Lo” – offensive – not greeting with “Father, ...”

30 Refuses to acknowledge his brother.

Offers contempt and sarcasm – even accusing the young son of doing things he might not have done

Older son had nothing to lose by his brother’s return

Literally everything that the older brother saw around him was his since his brother’s share was liquidated

31 Son – shows affliction of the Father.

### **3. Applications:**

1. There is a great rejoicing when one soul repents
2. Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay – cf. Psalm 1
3. God is always willing and waiting to welcome us back home
4. When one repents, we don’t need to focus on their past sin-filled life but on their restored new life
5. As long as there is still breath in the nostrils, there is time to come back to God!

### **The following summary is adapted from Mark Nichols Posey:**

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|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Realization – v. 17 | 5. Repentance – v. 21a  |
| 2. Remorse – v. 18a    | 6. Restitution – v. 21b |
| 3. Resolve – v. 18b    | 7. Renewal – v. 24a     |
| 4. Return – v. 20      | 8. Rejoicing – v. 24b   |

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April 1, 2020 PM Wood Church of Christ  
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