

Parables - The Lost Son

This morning we're going to look at a parable that is very familiar. This is one that even unchurched people are somewhat familiar with. It's one that is used to express the Father's love for us. It's used to show us that the grass is not always greener on the other side and going our own way is not as great as we think it will be. It's also used to teach against being judgmental.

It's the parable of the lost son (prodigal son). And today as we read it, I pray you have fresh revelation by the Spirit on how it applies to you.

Luke 15:11-13 (NKJV)

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

Luke 15:14-16 (NKJV)

But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

Luke 15:17-19 (NKJV)

"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."' "

Luke 15:20-21 (NKJV)

"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.'

Luke 15:22-24 (NKJV)

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

Luke 15:25-27 (NKJV)

“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

Luke 15:28-30 (NKJV)

“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.

Luke 15:31-32 (NKJV)

“And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

Amazing story of love and redemption. I bet most of you can relate to being the son or the brother, or maybe even both. Many of you know that amazing love of being redeemed.

How many of you have heard of the manifold wisdom of God?

Ephesians 3:10 (NKJV)

to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,

Manifold means much varied, different shades or expressions. So the varied expressions of God are to be made known BY they church TO the principalities and powers.

I believe that today as you get revelation on this parable, it's you to declare to the enemy.

So you have the father, the son, the brother. These are usually seen as the 3 main roles. This parable is told to highlight one of the three depending on the angle. And they're all good. This is the manifold wisdom...different expressions, love, selfishness, judgmental attitude...

But what would you think if I told you that none of the three... the father, the son, or the brother were really the MAIN character. That Jesus' original intent (not that these other expressions are wrong), but the original intent was to reveal a different mystery?

Not unlike the parable of the hidden treasure, it's key to not just read the parable in isolation. What was going on around it, especially before it?

This parable is actually told along with 2 others, back to back to back. This is the third of the three. The others were the lost sheep and the lost coin. This one is the lost son.

Look at what is right before these three:

Luke 15:1-2 (NKJV)

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."

The religious leaders tried to disqualify Jesus and His ministry because of the people He ministered to. To put it plain, they said "this Man hangs out with losers"

They didn't see these people as having value. They didn't see them as the ones that were worth the time or the effort. They were outcasts. They had already been deemed unworthy by the "church" of that day.

Jesus hears what they say. He hears the judgement, trying to disqualify His work because the people are losers...

But Jesus doesn't see them that way. You see there's a difference between being a loser and being lost.

- A loser no longer has what they once had. It's gone. They lost it. No hope, can't "redo"
- One who is lost just needs to be found. Don't know where they are going. Hope to be rescued.

Jesus kicks off 3 parables about something that is lost where the focus is on what is lost not on who lost it.

When the lost sheep is found. The shepherd rejoices. He calls his boys and says "rejoice with me"

Jesus follows it up with:

Luke 15:7 (NKJV)

I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

The second parable of the lost coin is very similar, once it's found, the woman rejoices, calls her ladies group and says "rejoice with me"

And Jesus follows it up with:

Luke 15:10 (NKJV)

Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Think about these statements. Joy in heaven. Joy in the presence of the angels of God. These were not just stories about a shepherd and a sheep, a woman and a coin, or even a father, son and brother...

The main character of these parables is HEAVEN and the focus is on heaven’s reactions.

See the parable of the lost son follows the same script. Something lost, something found, tremendous joy and celebration!

What Jesus is doing with these parables is contrasting the attitude of the religious leaders with the attitude of heaven!

With that direction, consider the brother in today’s parable. His attitude sure mirrored the Pharisees.

Luke 15:28-30 (NKJV)

“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.

This is the heart of the religious people, then and today. (We’re not religious, right?).

But why do this for them when I’ve been faithful. Why celebrate that. Celebrate me.

Do you see the problem? It’s the “why waste time on the loser?” mentality. But I say he’s not a loser, he’s lost. And Jesus says that when the lost are found, there is rejoicing in heaven!

And when there is rejoicing in heaven...because the lost is found...the Father rolls out the red carpet...no matter your past...welcome home. All I have is yours.

Luke 15:22-24 (NKJV)

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

People of God...this is how we should react when a lost soul is found and saved! That's what is happening in heaven! Do you understand the magnitude of this?

What is going on in heaven? Worship. Who are they worshipping? Jesus.
Everything in heaven is giving glory to God. Their eyes are fixed on Jesus, yet when ONE sinner repents, they rejoice! WHY?

There is no greater love. No greater miracle. No greater work. It's the work of the Holy Spirit and it brings God glory!

At the moment one repents and comes to the Lord, they are covered in the best robe, the robe of righteousness. Do you know this is a spiritual act that takes place in heaven? Right in front of the Father in heaven we are covered in Christ...the Righteous One. The Father looks at us and sees Jesus.

Then we receive the signet ring of the Father's authority. This ring confirms our authority to act on behalf of the ring giver with His power. Because of Jesus' authority in heaven we can walk in His power on earth.

There is nothing more that needs to be done for you to assert power over the enemy. You have full rights and access to heavenly power. PRAY!

This authority has been given in heaven so:

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You are one with Jesus!

Ephesians 2:6 (NKJV)

and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

You have the robe, the ring, and now the sandals and fattened calf...these represent provision, position, and honor.

Not a loser but a victor. Not lost but found, restored, redeemed, beloved!

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

You need to know that God's work in you on this earth is always due to the work already accomplished in heaven!

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NKJV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Do you hear that church? Reserved in heaven for you. No one can take your seat. You don't have to worry. You don't have to fear. If you are born again and in Christ...then you are a child of God and He has reserved seating for you!

This is what happens in heaven, when the lost are found. Rejoicing and reservation.

What people don't understand is that everyone is invited to the party. Everyone gets the "For God so loved the WORLD that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOEVER believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life!

Everyone gets the invite, and the Holy Spirit is constantly reminding them. He wants them to come. He desires their presence. He won't make them come. But He wants them there.

It's a celebration in heaven. It's a real thing. In revelation 19 we see the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's a heavenly celebration. (Isaiah 25:6 - best meats, finest wines). And you are invited! If you belong to Jesus, there's a place reserved for you.

If the focus is heaven and heaven's response to the lost being saved...isn't it important that we see people not as losers (like the religious Pharisees), but as the lost who need to be found (like Jesus)