

Sing Hymn 119 in the Lloyd Hymnal "The Prodigal Son"

The Father's Sons Luke 15:11-24

11 And 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 falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. **13** And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. **14** And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. **15** And 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 fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. **17** And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, **19** And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. **20** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet 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 unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. **22** But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: **23** And bring hither the fatted calf, 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.

This parable begins in the father's house. Where the son is born, provided for, and trained up in the way of the father's house. He has his every need supplied by the father. He grows up in nature and looks out upon the world and sees the way of the lust of the flesh shining brightly before him. He request of his father (in my words); Father give me all that is coming to me that I may go forth and make my own mark upon the world. I need to get from under your stewardship and training; I see many pleasures out there that I cannot enjoy here in your house. I need to get away from here.

We see in the parable that the father, though not required to, gives to both sons their living. This particular son soon takes his leave and goes his own way. He soon spent all that the father had given to him and was left destitute. Now, the life he is living is far from home tending pigs. For the Jews this was as low as one could get because pigs were an abomination to them. Notice that no man gave him anything. That is the way of the world of sin; it is compassionless.

In verse 17 we see that the son, when he was ready to eat slop with the pigs and was destitute of friendship in the world of sin, came to himself. This is the picture of being born again. Being born again, we see that now he makes confession: 1- he had a desire to be at the father's house, 2- that he is a sinner of the vilest kind, 3- and that he is unworthy to be called a son.

Being born again; what are the 1st thoughts of this son? He thinks first of the father's house from whence he came. This helps us understand the scripture found in: **Pr 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.** May God help us to be diligent in our duty, as fathers and mothers and churches, to teach our children that God is the provider of all that we have. May God help us to feed them from his word of truth and teach them that God is Father to all his children. We should bring up our children in church; and they should learn from our living example, that the Father's house is the place for sons and daughters to be.

What is the 1st action he takes while he is still with the pigs? He makes confession of his sin. Now he is ready to begin the journey home.

Being born again; what is the 1st thing he does? He starts the journey back to the father's house, resolving to make full confession of his sin to his father. Notice that in his confession the first thing he confesses is that he has sinned against heaven, or rather against God. Recognizing that he is

not even worthy to be called a son, he resolves to ask for a servant's place. When he arrives and meets his father he makes his confession the 2nd time.

What does the son's confession tell us? Notice he asks for a servant's place and not the return of his sonship. This tells us; he no longer wants his own way. He is now willing to live in the way of the father's house. This is why repentant sinners come forward and ask for a home in the church. It says to God the Father; we are willing to live in the way you have provided in the church of Grace.

Now notice the father saw him coming back and hastened to meet him. Notice the father kissed him. Why? It signifies that the father was waiting his return and the love he had for his son that has been lost to him. This helps us understand the scripture in: **2Co 13:12 Greet one another with an holy kiss.** And in: **1Pe 5:14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.** This is a picture of the delight we should have when we meet a brother or sister in Christ. It does not mean to get entangled in fleshly kisses of lustful passion.

Notice that the father had compassion upon him. Why? Because he was a son and he loved his son. It is thus with the born again sinner, now inhabited with the Holy Spirit. God looks upon the repentant sinner and sees His Son, Jesus Christ who shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. God has compassion for us because his Son had compassion for us. The love of God is unlike the love of the sinful world. Remember that in his destitution in the world of sin "**and no man gave unto him.**" in comparison to life in the church of Jesus Christ: "**Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**" which is what this father did for his son that returned unto him. In the time of this parable, a son doing the things this son did; asking for his inheritance before his father was dead, was like telling his father you are dead to me. It was the greatest disgrace that could be brought upon the name of a father. Yet, the son found compassion and love when he returned. This is exactly the love that Jesus demonstrated for us in giving his life for us.

Notice, that the father never told the son he was forgiven but rather the father demonstrated his love for his repentant son. Why is this? It demonstrates to us how God the Father, through the finished work of God the Son, has already forgiven our sins before we come to him in confession. We see a picture here that when a repentant sinner comes to the church asking for a home, they don't need our forgiveness, they already have the Father's forgiveness.

Notice that the father gave him a robe, a ring, shoes, and made a feast. The robe is emblematic of the robe of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is put upon the repentant sinner when they are born again. The ring shows that the sonship of the repentant sinner has been restored. The shoes teach us that the born again sinner, having been brought up in the way, is now prepared to walk in humble submission in the way of the father's house.

The feast reminds us; when we come to the communion table, we have the abundance of the father's house in the fatted calf that was slain. Jesus Christ was slain for us that we might come to the table and remember;

- what we were before we were born again;
- what we are now because of the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection, of Christ;
- and what we will be in eternity because of the love and compassion of our heavenly Father and the sacrificed Son.

The lesson I want us all to see is the sonship: He was a son when he was born. He was a son in his upbringing. He was a son when he left home. He was a son while he was gone from home. He was a son when he was brought to understanding. He was a son when he was given a repentant heart. He was a son when he was made willing to make confession to his father. He was a son when he returned home. He was a son all the time. What does this demonstrate to us? It demonstrates the doctrine of predestination that the bible teaches. How?

In this age of grace in which we live we are like the son described here in the parable. How can this be you ask? God teaches us in scripture: ***Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*** If you don't believe this, you don't believe God, because it is the Word of God. You still want to live your own way instead of the way of the father's house. You do know that God is our Father don't you? Scripture teaches us this fact, when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, in: ***Lu 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.***

God the Father knew you before you were born into the world. ***Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*** You came into the world a son. The very first sin you committed you left the Father's house on a sinful journey in life. When you died in your sin is the same picture as when the son asked the father for his living and left home to live an unrighteous life.

We remember, in our study of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, that God always sent persecution and judgment upon Israel when they forgot God and turned from the way of the father's house. We see the same thing happened in this son's life. God sent a famine, and destitution to him, to bring the son back to his senses. God does this to all his disobedient children.

When you are born again, you will remember your Father in heaven, and the provision of the Father's house. You will repent, confess, and seek a servant's place. If this does not happen to you before you die, there is no evidence that you were ever born again.

When you were born you were a son, when you left home you were a son, when you lost all the love you had for your own way you were a son, when you were born again you were a son, when you repented you were a son, when you came to the church asking for a home you were a son, when you die your natural death you will still be a son, when you are buried you will still be a son, when you are resurrected from the grace you will finally know what sonship really means when God the Father has welcomed you to your eternal home. No matter what sins you have committed and what kind of life you have lived, if you were a child of God before you left the Father's house, you will always be a Child of God. Now do you see the picture of predestination and the finished work of Jesus Christ?

This picture encompasses every heir of grace in the world. This gives us a better understanding of the scripture in: ***Joh 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.***

This parable then illuminates the scripture we cited earlier in: ***Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*** Jesus is teaching, in this parable of the lost son, that predestination and eternal salvation are a reality, as you can plainly see.

Finally, when the son came home there was a feast and time of rejoicing. Remember what God tells us in scripture about a repentant sinner? ***Lu 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*** Truly, when one is born again and joins the church body there is great joy, but, that joy is nothing to be compared to the joy of the resurrection and entrance into our eternal home in heaven, in unbroken communion with God.

Praise the Lord, for the love and compassion of God the Father! Praise Jesus Christ, God the Son, for his finished work of forgiveness of sins and eternal redemption! Praise and thanks to Christ for the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost in us; so that we will always be recognized by God as a son! Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!

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