

Text— Luke 15:11-32

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection is the familiar parable commonly known as “the prodigal son”— although two sons are mentioned. One son, the younger, was indeed prodigal, that is, recklessly wasteful. The older son, while not prodigal, was quite high in self-esteem.

Now, as most of you undoubtedly recall, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Therefore, our sermon text is not meant to merely entertain us, but is to teach us important spiritual truths.

As our Scripture selection was read aloud and you followed along, it was certainly apparent that it relates a caring father’s dealings with his two sons. Therefore, we will consider the fact that our sermon text pictures to us some qualities of:

“OUR HEAVENLY FATHER’S LOVE”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Our heavenly Father is lovingly generous to all
- 2) Our heavenly Father’s love is sometimes spurned
- 3) Our heavenly Father’s love is compassionate, forgiving, undeserved, and sacrificial

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Verses 11 & 12, ----- (Luke 15:11-12)

Upon entering our sermon text, Jesus begins a parable by remarking: *A certain man had two sons.* No wife or daughters are mentioned; so, it was just a father with his two sons— plus hired servants, as we learn later in our text. Hence, the man with the two sons was apparently wealthy.

The younger of the two sons *said to his father,*

Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

Thus, the younger son did not wish to wait until his father passed-away to receive his inheritance; no, the younger son wanted his share of his father’s wealth immediately. The older son had not made the request; but, note we are informed that the father *divided unto them his living*. Accordingly, both sons received an early inheritance from their father.

Think about what is pictured to us in regards to God the Father by the events mentioned in the parable thus far: our heavenly Father has blessed ALL people, whether they ask Him to give them blessings or not, “for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” as Jesus remarks in Matthew 5:45. The Lord God is He, “Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever,” as Psalm 136:25 reports. Yes, it’s as we read in Acts 17:24-25, “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” So, our heavenly Father is lovingly generous to all.

More importantly, our heavenly Father has given the entire world of people what we all need most, that being, a Savior from sin, death and damnation, “for there is no man that sinneth not, [and] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (1 Kings 8:46; Romans 6:23; John 3:16-18) So, our heavenly Father is lovingly generous to all.

Realize that those who are lost by unbelief have no one to blame but themselves, for 1 Timothy 2:4-6 informs us that God is He, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Indeed, God is He who cried, as Hosea 13:9 relates, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." So, our heavenly Father is lovingly generous to all. Let us love our heavenly Father in return for His abundant love toward us.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see our heavenly Father's love is sometimes spurned.

Verse 13, ----- (Luke 15:13)

It was not very long after the father divided unto his two sons his living, that *the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.* Yeah, that young man was not about to hang around home; no, he wanted to party and have all sorts of worldly fun, even having sex with prostitutes (as we learn in verse 30 of our text); so, he split from home and went far away to another country, where he spent all he had inherited.

The young man undoubtedly had plenty of friends as long as his worldly-wealth lasted, for so it goes. Nevertheless, he wasted what he had received from his loving father; thereby, he spurned his father's love.

Now, let's apply it to spiritual things and our relationship with our heavenly Father. Many young people have been brought up in God's Word; but, as soon as they are confirmed, they split and go off into the world, rarely to be seen in church to hear God the Father's Holy Word. Oh, they run off to party and have many worldly-minded friends. They waste the riches of faith that they had received, as they push the things of God aside in order to have

what they think are good times; they spurn the love of our heavenly Father.

Verse 14, ----- (Luke 15:14)

The young man in our sermon text spent all he had inherited; and then, *there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.* Once the money was gone, so was the partying and the abundant food and drink the young man had grown accustomed to having.

Likewise, in spiritual things, it happens that many a person who has split from regular church attendance and regular private reading time in God's Word, has found himself or herself in want, as he or she begins to realize a lack of real meaning in a life without the Lord and His Word. Furthermore, worldly-minded friends do not stick around once they get no more benefits from the so-called "friendship" they had with a Christian who has left what is to be his or her first love.

My friends, let us take to heart the warning given in 1 John 2:15-17, where we read, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Yes, our heavenly Father's love is sometimes spurned. Let us endeavor to love our heavenly Father because He first loved us, rather than spurning His love.

Verses 15 & 16, ----- (Luke 15:15-16)

The young man who had left home to party and had blown his inheritance with riotous living, found himself in want of the basic necessities of life; subsequently, he *went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

Can you imagine it? A young Jewish man feeding pigs, while being so hungry that he would have enjoyed eating the swine-food, but he was not permitted to partake of even those husks— those carob-tree pods.

Verses 17-19, ----- (Luke 15:17-19)

The young man finally mentally woke-up and realized how sinful and foolish he had become, for *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! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

Thus, the young man set his sights back on home, where he could have the nourishment of good food; and, he was determined to go to his father with a penitent heart, confess his sins, and be satisfied to be considered a hired servant of his father.

Let's apply the scene to spiritual things. When one spurns one's heavenly Father's love and leaves behind regular church attendance and regular time in God's Word, it sometimes happens – by the grace of God – that the person spiritually awakens when he or she realizes that worldly living leaves one starving for what one needs most: peace of heart, peace with God through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In John 14:27 we learn that Jesus once said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Therefore, my friends, how is it that you, me and anyone else can have that peace which Jesus supplies? Holy Writ answers, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into

this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 1:9-10)

Let us be grateful to God the Father for His undeserved love toward us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:23-26) Let us never forget our heavenly Father's love is sometimes spurned. God grant that we do not spurn His love.

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see our heavenly Father's love is compassionate, forgiving, undeserved, and sacrificial.

Verse 20, ----- (Luke 15:20)

The young prodigal son was journeying back 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.* What a tender and beautiful scene as we behold a father's loving compassion toward his wayward son, who had finally awakened from foolishness and sinfulness.

However, do we not see a picture of our heavenly Father and His love which is so very compassionate toward all of us sinners? Sure we do! God the Father comes running toward us in His Holy Word, ready to forgive us undeserving sinners again and again. It's as we read in Psalm 103:8-14, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide:

neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

Verses 21-24, -----. (Luke 15:21-24)

The young son was truly penitent, for he said to his father: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*

Fellow Christians, we sin daily and should likewise regularly and honestly confess to our heavenly Father: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* Oh, we forget how privileged we Christians are, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” — declares Romans 8:14-15. Yes, we Christians are adopted sons of God, while Jesus Christ is God’s only begotten Son who is not ashamed to call us believers His brothers, for Hebrews 2:9-12 says, “we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” Therefore, it is plainly evident, our heavenly Father’s love is compassionate, forgiving, undeserved, and sacrificial.

Notice in our sermon text that the father of the

young man treated his penitent young son with the utmost in undeserved love, for he had a big dinner-party for him. This scene reminds us again of how abundantly loving and generous our heavenly Father is to us undeserving sinners.

Verses 25-27, -----. (Luke 15:25-27)

The father’s older son had been out, apparently working in the field. Upon approaching the house, he heard music and dancing, as a celebration was occurring. *And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.* Hence, a big dinner-party was going on in recognition of the fact his younger brother had safely returned home.

Likewise, we Christians should be joyful when one who has strayed, repents and returns to the Lord in faith, once again joining in public worship at church, taking a renewed interest in God’s Word.

Verses 28-32, -----. (Luke 15:28-32)

The older son was not happy about his brother or his father. The father went outside to his older son, *and intreated him*, imploring him to come into the house also. But what did the older son do? He complained to his father, saying, *Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.*

Notice the older son went so far as to tell his father he had never disobeyed him in anything. Seriously? That older son was quite stuck-on-himself with a Pharisaical attitude— no lack of high self-esteem in that dude! But, are not we sometimes inclined to think we are so much more righteous acting than the next guy or gal? Sure we are, “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” declares Ecclesiastes 7:20.

The father of the two sons lovingly corrected his older son by saying, *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.*

My friends, it is right that we should be happy and celebrate when even one person comes to repentance— contrition over his or her sins, followed by sincere faith in Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and Lord. Let us never forget that Jesus says in Luke 15:7, “joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

Let us be truly grateful for our heavenly Father’s love. Take it to heart we would all be lost and damned if not for our heavenly Father’s love.

Fellow Christians, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward being thankful for our heavenly Father’s love, for He sent Jesus to redeem us, and He sent His Holy Spirit to grant us faith in Christ, keep us in the faith and strengthen us in the faith, as He works through His Holy Word in our hearts. Amen.

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