

## The Prodigal's Father

Luke 15: 20-24

Today as we celebrate Father's Day, we have considered a very familiar passage in Scripture. Jesus shared a parable that has become known as *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*. He talked of a man who had two sons – one of which desired to receive his portion of the inheritance at that time. Surely knowing how the son would respond, the father agreed and gave the son his portion. Immediately after receiving his inheritance, the son journeyed to a far country and wasted his inheritance on extravagant, riotous living. Now being poor and destitute, he went to work for a man within the far country feeding swine. After a season of famine and despair, the son came to himself, realizing the error of his ways, and desired to return home. He did not feel worthy to be considered a son any longer but would have been content serving as a hired servant of his father.

The portion of the text we have considered today focuses on the father's treatment of the wayward son as he returned home, seeking forgiveness and a place to dwell. The loving compassion of the father stands as a challenge to all men, and more importantly reveals the love of the heavenly Father for all His children. As we consider the [details](#) of this gracious encounter, I want to discuss: [The Prodigal's Father](#).

**I. The Character of the Father** (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.**

Following the rebellious conduct of the son, this statement reveals much about the committed character of his father. Notice:

**A. His Position** – We discover that while the son was a great way off from home, his father saw his return. This reveals that the father held an elevated position. He was able to see his surroundings, having a vantage point of the landscape that surrounded his home.

- We must never forget the high and lofty position of our heavenly Father and that of our Lord, Jesus Christ. They inhabit heaven, well aware of the lives we live – always having a clear vantage point of where we are in the journey. He sees clearly what we cannot.

**B. His Perception** – Long before the son ever made it home, the father saw him. The father knew his son well, and he recognized him as he made his way home. We don't know how long the son had been in the far country, but he was still known and recognized of his father.

- While Jesus never encouraged or condoned sin, this does reveal a gracious truth. Regardless where our journey takes us, our Father always knows us and is mindful of our position. Those who have been saved by His grace have been adopted into the family. We are then children of God, recognized and loved by the Father. You will never take a journey in life, regardless of where it leads, that your heavenly Father will forget that you belong to Him!

**C. His Persistence** (20) – *But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* Again, Jesus does not reveal how long the son had been gone, but when he returned, the father saw him long before he made it home. Now, I suppose it could have been mere chance that the father was looking down the road at that particular moment, but I don't think that is the case. I believe the father watched and looked daily for the son to return. He was burdened and heart-broken over the absence of his son, and he diligently watched, waiting for his return.

- You will never be beyond the loving gaze of the Father. Life may lead you down a path that you never dreamed you would travel. You may have come to your senses in a far country, engaged in riotous living. While the Father is never pleased with rebellion, His love and care never cease. He stands watching and waiting for your return. Maybe you don't as of yet have a relationship with the Father through the gracious sacrifice of His Son on the cross for your sin. I have good news – He is waiting for you to respond in repentance and faith unto salvation!

**II. The Compassion of the Father** (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.* We also discover the great compassion shown by the father to his wayward son. Consider:

**A. His Attitude** – *But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion.* This is not the reaction everyone would have shown at this time. One might expect the father to have been angry and less than gracious to the son at this point. He had wasted his inheritance and brought shame to the family. Rather than rejecting his son for such foolish behavior, the father had compassion. He rejoiced that his son was alive and had returned home, regardless of the disappointment he had brought.

- I rejoice that our Lord is gracious and compassionate. What hope would any have if He dealt with us according to our actions or gave what we deserved. While He does not take pleasure in our failures and sin, He is always compassionate toward us, desiring fellowship with us!

**B. His Acceptance** (20) – Keep in mind the son would have been pleased to have been welcomed as a hired servant. He did not expect to be welcomed with open arms. While the father was naturally pleased his son had returned home, he could have shunned him and not wanted anything to do with him. That is not the reaction Jesus described. When the father saw the son a long way off, he ran to meet him. He was thrilled his son had returned and welcomed him home!

- Again, I want to emphasize that the Lord never condones or encourages sin and rebellion. Such behavior grieves His heart. At times there will be lasting consequences for our sin. However, once we are saved by grace, we are adopted into the family and that will never change. We are accepted of the Father, not based on our merit or worth, but on our relationship to His Son and His finished work of redemption! We are forever accepted of the Father because of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

**C. His Affection** (20) – *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.* When the father reached his son, he immediately showed his love and affection for him. He fell on his neck and kissed him. This doesn't have the idea of a quick, one-time kiss, but repeated kisses of joy. The father was overjoyed that his son had returned and he showered him with love and affection.

- We may disappoint our heavenly Father because of our sin, even grieving the Holy Spirit at times, but when we return with a heart of genuine repentance, we are assured of His great love and affection. We are loved beyond measure. This was eternally displayed at Calvary!

**III. The Consolation from the Father** (21-24) – As we examine these closing verses, imagine the shame the son felt at this moment. He had prepared himself to serve among the hired hands, no longer being viewed as a son. The reception and consolation he received was much more than he expected. Notice:

**A. The Grace** (21-22) – *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.* <sup>[22]</sup> *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.* The son was well aware of his transgressions. He realized that he had shamed the father and wasn't even worthy to be considered part of the family any more. He fully expected to be severely punished and chastised for his behavior. His father however didn't respond in a manner consistent with what the son deserved – he responded in grace. He was not viewed as a hired servant or a slave, he was welcomed and received as a son!

- That is why grace is so amazing. None deserve the acceptance and blessing of God. We lived a life that indulged the flesh and brought shame to the Lord. Sometimes following salvation, we even wander into the hog pens of sin. However, the Lord always responds with grace to those who come unto Him. I am thankful He doesn't treat me as I deserve. I would yet be without hope and apart from salvation. His grace covers a multitude of sin. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds!

**B. The Gifts** (22-23) – The son never expected the reception he received. He returned home filthy from the lifestyle he had lived, wreaking of the hog pen in which he dwelt. This would have been especially shameful to any respectable Jew. However, his father called for a robe to be brought and put upon him, covering the shame of his past. He called for a ring to be placed upon his finger, recognizing him as part of the family. He called for shoes to be put upon his feet – only slaves walked around without shoes. He was not a condemned slave; he was a beloved son. He called for the fattest calf to be killed, so his hungry son could eat and they all could rejoice in his safe return.

- Isn't that exactly what we received in Christ? The garments of sin were covered with a coat of His righteousness. He placed a ring on our finger, declaring we were part of the family, heirs of God. He placed shoes of grace on our feet, delivering us from the slavery and bondage of sin. We now feast from His table, rejoicing in His mercy and grace! What a loving Savior we serve!

**C. The Gratitude** (24) – *For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.* Rather than being angry and banishing his son from the family, the father rejoiced that his son was alive and had returned home. His return had brought great joy to the father and he wanted others to know of his gratitude.

- We serve a God of holiness who demands complete righteousness. He cannot and will not condone sin. His righteous nature demands that sin be judged and atonement made. Through His grace He provided atonement for our sin through the sacrifice of His Son. He judged our sin in the body of Jesus as He hung on the cross, dying for you and me. Salvation was provided and the Father desires all to come to Him in salvation. He desires fellowship with the saved by grace. The Father is always pleased when a sinner realizes their need and comes to Him in repentance and faith. Nothing pleases the Father more than one coming to Christ in salvation. He rejoices when a backslidden believer is restored. What a gracious, loving Lord we serve!

**Conclusion:** This has beautifully illustrated the love of God for us. He desires all to be saved and enjoy fellowship with Him. Are you saved today? If so, are you walking in fellowship with Him. Are

we willing to forgive those who have wronged us like the prodigal's father? If there are needs in your life, particularly salvation, come to Christ today!