

GOOD NEWS FOR THE PRODIGAL SON

SLIDE

Luke 15:11-24

*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**. ¹⁴ 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.*

¹⁷ "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."'

*²⁰ "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.'*

²² "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."

Most of us relate to this young guy as a person like we were before we came to Christ ... before we were saved. So, just like he came home to the Father, we likewise see ourselves coming home and becoming His child ...

The evangelist preaches this message and people come to Christ ... which is great ...

But ...

THE TRUTH OF THIS STORY IS NOT ABOUT A YOUNG GUY GETTING SAVED

- **SLIDE HE IS ALREADY SAVED**
- **HE IS ALREADY A SON OF THE FATHER (v11) ... AND ONCE A SON ... ALWAYS A SON**
- **HE HAS A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER ... ALBEIT NOT A VERY GOOD ONE**
- **HE LIVES IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE FROM THE START OF THE STORY**

NB: HIS SON **STATUS** NEVER CHANGED EVEN THOUGH HIS **STATE** DID ...

Verse 24 '... *This my son [status] was dead [state] and is alive again; he was lost [state] and is found ...*'

NB: OUR **STATE** MAY CHANGE BUT OUR **STATUS** [SON] NEVER DOES!

SO, WHO DOES THIS YOUNG, SAVED-SON OF THE FATHER REPRESENT?

HE REPRESENTS **A BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER LIVING IN THE FLESH**

We see this young guy with his **flesh raging** ...

However, he is still a son of the Father ... living in the House of the Father...

HOW MUCH DOES THAT TELL YOU ABOUT THE GRACE OF THE FATHER ...

THE TITLE 'PRODIGAL'

We commonly call this story, '**The Prodigal Son**'. in fact, *whilst preparing this message I heard on the TV a father say about his son coming home, 'The Prodigal has returned'*.

Many think 'Prodigal' means 'Lost'... Like we were lost and Jesus found us.

BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN LOST.

'PRODIGAL' MEANS WASTEFUL.

(That name *prodigal* comes from verse 13 which tells us the young son 'wasted his possessions with prodigal living.'

PRODIGAL IS A EUPHEMISM

This term prodigal does not describe this young guy's grotesque fleshly behavior adequately ...

It is too kind.

'Prodigal' is *a euphemism* for AN IMMATURE ... UNGRATEFUL ... DISRESPECTFUL ... INSOLENT ... SELF-CENTERED SON ...

LOOK AT HOW HE APPROACHES HIS FATHER

He marches up to his loving Father ... looks Him in the eye and states ...

(The message Bible puts it in its proper tone -)

Luke 15:12 MSG **SLIDE**

The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me ...'

LIKE THAT 'QUEEN' SONG -

I want it all,

I want it all,

I want it all,

And I want it now ...

SO, DO YOU STILL RELATE TO THIS YOUNG BOY?

THIS IS US IN 'THE FLESH'

*Few ... of the publicans and sinners ... **had sinned so deeply** as the young man of the story. Indecent haste to be free from the orderly quiet home-life, ingratitude, utter forgetfulness of all duty, the wildest profligacy (shameless decadence) - these were the sins of the prodigal. - E B Browning*

The flesh is not at home in the father's house ...

The flesh craves the world ... for in the world its lusts are expressed ... its pride is asserted ...

ITS ALMOST LIKE THERE COMES A TIME IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES WHERE WE HAVE TO COME TO TERMS WITH OUR FLESH ... OUR OUTWARD MEMBERS ...

IN THIS STORY, THE FLESH MANIFESTS IN 2 DIFFERENT WAYS

1. IN REBELLION

2. IN RELIGION

THERE ARE TWO SONS IN THE HOUSE ...

THE YOUNGER IS REBELLIOUS ...

THE OLDER IS RELIGIOUS ...

BUT THEY HAVE BOTH 'TESTED POSITIVE' TO 'THE FLESH PANDEMIC' ...

- **THE ELDER BROTHER REPRESENTS RELIGION ... TRYING TO SUBDUE THE FLESH UNDER THE LAW & JUSTIFY HIMSELF BY DEAD WORKS**

The flesh cannot be overcome by the law as we see in Romans 7 ... it will win every time ...

- **THE YOUNGER BROTHER** GETS SICK OF TRYING TO CONTROL THE FLESH BY RELIGION & SAYS, 'Oh stuff it ... I'm gonna just go with the cravings of the flesh ...'
(In many ways ... this is more honest than being religious)

WE CAN LIVE IN RELIGION OR REBELLION

THE ONLY WAY TO OVERCOME THE FLESH IS TO UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST & BEGIN TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:16

... Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

We overcome the flesh, not by repenting of our unrighteousness, but by rejoicing in His Righteousness ...

SO, THE YOUNGER SON WAS **DRIVEN BY THE FLESH** DOWN THE PATH OF REBELLION, INTO THE WORLD OF PARASITES, PROSTITUTES & PIGS ...

His first stop is a wine bar which is not a spiritual place at all

- *In fact, as he's going in, he sees 'a spirit' at the door weeping. He says, 'What's the matter?' 'Oh I can't go in there!' wails the spirit. 'Why not' says the prodigal? 'They told me they don't serve spirits in that bar.'*
- *When he goes in, he sees a Jewish rabbi with a parrot on his shoulder. The prodigal asks, "Where did you get that?" The parrot says, "I got him from Jerusalem, they're everywhere there!"*
- *Next minute a blind man walks into the bar ... He had to be taken to hospital and got 10 stitches above his eye ...*

SO HE ENJOYS THE PLEASURES OF SIN FOR A SEASON. BUT INDEPENDENCE FROM THE FATHER ... CUTS US OFF FROM THE BLESSING ... THEN DESPERATE TIMES COME & WE'RE ALONE ...

Luke 15:14-16 **SLIDE**

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.***

SLIDE

The World's pig pen is a place of disgrace ... disease ... desperate loneliness ... poverty ... abandonment ...

BUT ALSO ...

IT'S A PLACE DESIGNED BY GOD TO BRING THE FLESH TO ITS KNEES ...

THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE PRIDE & ARROGANCE DIE IN DISGRACE ...
WHERE FLESHLY INDEPENDENCE IS BURIED IN THE MUD & CAN'T GET OUT ...
WHERE THE REALITY OF LIFE LOOKS YOU IN THE EYE ...
WHERE WE SEE HOW TEMPORAL SUCCESS IS ... HOW SHALLOW FAME &
FORTUNE ARE ... HOW MANY REAL FRIENDS WE HAVE ... AND WHO REALLY
LOVES US ...

HERE OUR REAL NEED CRIES LOUDER THEN THE CRAVINGS OF THE FLESH

FROM THIS POINT ON 3 THINGS HAPPEN TO THIS YOUNG SON

1. HE COMES TO A PLACE OF GREAT REVELATION

Luke 15:17 **SLIDE**

*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!'*

Wisdom cries aloud in the streets, and even louder in the Pig-pen ...

C.S.LEWIS says, *Suffering is God's megaphone to awaken a sleeping world.*

Here the prodigal sees truth about who he's not ... and who he really is ...

*He sees **he's not some rich, privileged playboy ...***

He sees **HE'S A SON OF THE FATHER ...**

HE CAME TO REALISE HE WAS BORN AGAIN AS A CHILD OF THE FATHER ...

And immediately His thoughts turned to the Father and His house ...

He comes to terms with his new born-again nature ...

He sees his born-again nature doesn't belong in the pig-pen ...

He realizes, his born-again nature belongs in the Father's house ...

The flesh belongs in the world ...

But the son belongs in the Father's house.

He starts to see **he is a son of the Father** ... living like a beggar ...

He starts to **appreciate his Father** is strong and kind and generous ...

The Pig-pen is the place that fleshly independence will take you ...

But **thank God for the pig-pen** ...

Because it's here that grace abounds and people come to themselves ...

NOW HE BEGINS TO WALK BACK HOME

2. HE FINDS THE PATH OF GREAT GRACE

Luke 15:20 **SLIDE**

And **he arose and came to his Father**. But when he was still a great way off, his father (1) saw him and (2) had compassion, and (3) ran and (4) fell on his neck and (5) kissed him.

Notice the 5 Blessings of The Father ... 5 = Grace

GRACE ABOUND TOWARD US IN THINGS WE DO NOT DESERVE

THIS IS OUR PATH THROUGH THIS LIFE TOWARD THE PROMISE

As this story suggests in verse 20, He sees us 'afar off' ... walking through this world toward our eternal home.

However, we also see ... on this journey ... His love reaches out to us and we begin to experience:

(1) The Father's careful observance of every detail about us – '*I will guide you with my eye*' (Psalm 32:8)

(2) The Father's compassion as He understands our struggles ... even when we fail ...

(3) His eagerness to fellowship with us and be with us every minute of every day ...

(4) His strong embrace of total acceptance ... even though we may fail ...

(5) His affection and love for us ...

SO, IN OUR PROMO, WE ASKED THE QUESTION ...

'DID THIS YOUNG GUY LOSE HIS INHERITANCE?'

The Story clearly states in Luke 15:13-14

... [He] wasted his possessions with **prodigal living**.¹⁴ [And] spent all ...

I was always told the boy lost his inheritance ...

So, I was always confused as to how he managed to squander his whole inheritance by worldly living ...

BUT LET ME TELL YOU, THIS YOUNG GUY DID NOT LOSE HIS INHERITANCE

**SO WHAT WAS IT THAT HE WASTED? WHAT WAS HE GIVEN?
WAS IT HIS ETERNAL INHERITANCE?**

THE ANSWER IS NO!

**THIS YOUNG GUY WASTED HIS LIVELIHOOD ... NOT HIS ETERNAL
INHERITANCE.**

IT WAS A MONETARY AMOUNT GIVEN TO HIM TO SUSTAIN HIM IN THIS LIFE.

What the young guy asked for and what the Father gave him were two different things ...

Two different words are used ...

Luke 15:12

*And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me **the portion of goods** that falls to me.' So he divided (distributed) to them ... **livelihood**.*

In Greek this literally reads, ' ... Give me my share of wealth / property ... and He [the Father] divided ... to them... [their] **means of livelihood**.'

The Son asked for 'His share of the estate'

estate (ousias) Property, wealth, substance, i.e. Property.

The Father gave him a '**means of livelihood**'

Livelihood: *Bion* = the present state of existence, the means of livelihood.

This word 'Livelihood' is not the whole inheritance but THE MEANS TO GET BY.

It means 'worldly goods', a living. He [the Father] divided to them both [their] livelihood ...

This is like the aristocracy who would give their children a yearly allowance.

We see the same word used in 1 John 3:17 '... Whoever has his world's goods ...'

It's like the son's college fund that the Father was laying by for him ...

Like his insurance policy ... which he cashed in.

He didn't get the house ... the father's wealth ... the fatted calf ... the best robe ... or the servants ...

IN THE SAME WAY -

1. OUR INHERITANCE CANNOT BE POSSESSED BY US HERE AND NOW ...
IT IS TOO MAGNIFICENT & BIGGER THAN US ...
WE ENTER INTO OUR INHERITANCE WHEN JESUS RETURNS ...
2. OUR INHERITANCE CANNOT BE INHERITED BY THE FLESH ... BY SELFISH
AMBITION ... ('... *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ...*' -
1 Corinthians 15:50)
3. OUR INHERITANCE DOES NOT BELONG TO THIS WORLD ...
IT IS PRESERVED IN HEAVEN -

1 Peter 1:3-4 SLIDE

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, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

SO WHAT IS THIS ETERNAL, UNSPOILED INHERITANCE?

THIS IS THE 3RD THING THE YOUNG SON RECEIVES OF THE FATHER?

3. HE RECEIVES THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INHERITANCE

Luke 15:22 SLIDE

*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.*

This is a story and NOT doctrine so it can be interpreted a few different ways. However, today, I want to suggest that this part of the story is when the younger brother finally enters into His eternal inheritance at the coming of Jesus ...

WE SEE HE IS GIVEN 3 GREAT THINGS

1. THE ROBE
2. THE RING
3. THE SANDLES

1. THE ROBE IS OUR NEW HEAVENLY BODY

Your body will become immortal -

1 Corinthians 15:52-53

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption and **this mortal must put on immortality.***

2. THE RING IS OUR FULL SONSHIP.

We will enter into our complete sonship body, soul and spirit ... all the authority of sons of God.

3. THE SANDLES, ARE CHRIST'S PERFECTED HUMANITY

Humanity that He walked for 33 years ...

We will become fully human as Elohim – God originally intended us to be.

We will be fully human as Jesus was ...

A PERFECT HUMAN BEING ...

CONCLUSION

We spoke last week about the extreme contrast there is between what God is doing in His people and what is happening in the World ...

One is light shining brighter ... The other is darkness growing darker ...

SLIDE So, here in our story of 'The Prodigal Son' we see two extreme contrasting scenes -

1. We have seen the Father's House
2. We see here the world's pig pen

The Father's house is a place of -

provision ...

warmth ...

understanding ...

acceptance ...

kindness ...

generosity ('... How many of my Father's servants have bread enough and to spare ...' Luke 15:17) ...

and promise (the Fatted Calf was in view) ...

The World's pig pen is a place of –

disgrace ...

disease ...

desperate loneliness ...

uncleanness ...

poverty ...

and abandonment ...

**THERE IS ONE HOPE FOR YOU IN THIS LIFE ...
IT'S BECOMING CLEARER & CLEARER ...
ITS NOT YOUR ABILITY ... YOUR WEALTH ... YOUR LEGACY ...
THIS HAS ALL GONE UNDER THE BUS ...
IT IS FAITH IN YOUR FATHER GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.**