

## The Prodigal Son

Sunday 09<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Today we are looking at "The Prodigal Son"

Luke 15:31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours."

### LUKE CHAPTER FIFTEEN

<p><b>The Parable of the Lost Sheep</b> <b>1</b> Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.</p>	<p>Jesus said "He who has ears to hear let him hear" and whenever Jesus was seen to go somewhere, large crowds would gather to see him and Jesus would use the opportunity not just to heal and save, but also to teach the crowd. Just as we see in: <a href="#">Mark 10:1 Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.</a></p>
<p><b>2</b> And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."</p>	<p>This occasion is no different, the Pharisees complained - and Jesus taught them a lesson. The lesson is that Jesus came to the world to rescue the lost sinners, and the Pharisees were among-st the lost. The complaint of the oldest son is similar, when the Dad receives graciously the younger son and feasts with him. <a href="#">29 '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. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'</a> Just like the Pharisees who are self righteous and lacked understanding.</p>
<p><b>3</b> So He spoke this parable to them, saying: <b>4</b> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"</p>	<p>If a shepherd loses a sheep, he would not literally leave all the other sheep unattended. He would leave them in the care of others that can be trusted whilst he seeks the lost. Just as Jesus whom is the chief shepherd, leaves us with His Holy Spirit as a helper and appointed shepherds to lead His church. <a href="#">Jesus Promises Another Helper</a> <a href="#">John 14:15-18 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him (because we are Christians), for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.</a></p>
<p><b>5</b> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <b>6</b> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <b>7</b> 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.</p>	<p>Just as the shepherd carries his sheep on his shoulders, Jesus carried us on His shoulders when he carried our cross to calvary - where he died for all our sins. Those sheep who know the voice of their master are saved, if we hear Him and repent in His name we are saved, we are the sheep, and Jesus is our master. <a href="#">And let us remember that our master Jesus defeated death by His resurrection so we might also live.</a> God calls us to rejoice with Him every time one of His precious children are found and saved, repenting in the Lords name. We are all His children, His children is all of us whether old or young... <a href="#">When God finally receives us in Heaven there will be a marriage feast! A mega joyful celebration.</a></p>
<p><b>The Parable of the Lost Coin</b> <b>8</b> "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"</p>	<p>It has been said that Ten coins are given to a bride and worn as a crown once married. But today I will explain it differently. The lost coin being those who do not know Jesus, comparable to the lost sheep in the previous parable. This woman can be compared to the shepherd, Jesus in the previous parable. Jesus said of himself <a href="#">"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."</a> So Jesus is like a lamp that finds us and invites us to follow Him as He lights the way for us. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit acting as a Light within us, cleansing us, sweeping our vessels clean - so we can be born again and experience the light of life.</p>

## The Prodigal Son

Sunday 09<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<p><b>9</b> And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!'</p> <p><b>10</b> Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."</p>	<p>But how much more valuable we humans are than silver coins and gold coins in God's eyes?</p> <p>For us, there should be nothing more precious than the blood of Jesus, which was used to purchase us and take away our sins, at the cost of our Lord's own life. But doesn't that mean that from God's perspective nothing exists that is more precious than us? We are to God even more precious than His own blood.</p> <p>Imagine the kind of rejoicing their will be in heaven, each and every time a human responds to the Light of God, to His Holy Spirit - there are celebrations because we are found.</p>
<p><b>The Parable of the Lost Son</b></p> <p><b>11</b> Then He said: "A certain man had two sons.</p> <p><b>12</b> 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.</p> <p><b>13</b> And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.</p> <p><b>14</b> But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.</p> <p><b>15</b> Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.</p> <p><b>16</b> And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.</p>	<p>Most of us have to learn the hard way. No matter how much we are taught and given advice from our elders who have experienced things, we do not listen and just want to do what we want to do. The younger son wanted everything now, he wanted to receive and not give back and did not want to work for it or earn it, he wanted to take it all and indulge himself which is an abomination in God's eyes. The Bible tells us (Acts 20:35) "It is more blessed to give than to receive" and so his Dad gave the son his inheritance early, and his son receiving his inheritance walked away from his Dad. He spent all of his inheritance on committing his indulgence - the inheritance was all gone.</p> <p>And then, a famine came, and he found himself in great need with no one there to help him. He ended up working feeding Swine (Pigs). This was again an abomination to God because Jews (and I am assuming Jesus is speaking about Jews) are told that pigs are unclean... yet he had fallen so low that he was little more than a slave now feeding forbidden animals - and still hungry, that he would even gladly eat the pigs food to end his hunger.</p> <p>But God used this for the good, to bring him to his senses. Although his physical inheritance was all gone, there is an inheritance that we can <u>all</u> receive and it is eternal, it is life from God our Father.</p>
<p><b>17</b> "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!</p> <p><b>18</b> I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,</p> <p><b>19</b> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." "</p>	<p>Although the Dad did not go out hunting for his lost son, I have no doubt he would have been relentlessly praying to the Lord for his son. Just as we see Jesus doing in the Bible, for all of us. Like the woman who lit a Light searching for her lost coin, the Light eventually found the coin. The mans prayers would be heard by God through the intercession of the Holy Spirit, and the Light in the heart of the mans son sought him out and eventually prevailed, darkness was defeated and lessons were learned. The son chose to return to his Dad. We see intercessory prayer time and again, in the old testament and the new testament. (<a href="#">Moses comes to mind but that is straying too far from this parable</a>)</p> <p>In God's Kingdom there will be no want for anything, God will provide for all our needs and will always welcome a prodigal son back home. For all Christians, God is our Father. The younger son realised to be in the world means he has become a mere servant of the world. He had become a slave for the world and had nothing. He remembers the care his own Dad gives the servants at home. He must have thought "Why am I serving an ungodly master? Perhaps my own Dad will have a place for me. He has bread enough to spare, surely he will not reject me?" - I will return and serve him gladly.</p>
<p><b>20</b> 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.</p>	<p>The son was expecting to be rejected, he knew he has done wrong and is not worthy, in fact no one is worthy of the blessings God en-stows upon us, a lesson we all need to learn. But see what the Dad does, whom is a representative of God in this parable. He ran to his son falling on his neck and kissing him. Whilst his son is admitting his guilt and</p>

## The Prodigal Son

Sunday 09<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<p><b>21</b> 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.'</p> <p><b>22</b> "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.</p> <p><b>23</b> And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;</p> <p><b>24</b> for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.</p>	<p>his crimes saying "Dad I have sinned, I am not worthy"... see, the younger son returned with the ability to demonstrate humility in the name of God and the Dad showered him with Grace and Mercy and forgiveness.</p> <p>The younger son was like the lost sheep, and the lost coin, now found and <b>born again</b>. The Dad immediately puts on a celebration! "<b>My son has repented and admitted his crime, he is no longer dead in heavens eyes</b>", he is found and he is saved so the whole of heaven will celebrate. A feast is called and a fatted calf killed. He dresses his son in robes and fresh sandals and a ring is placed on his finger (possibly representative of a crown?) and as Christians - one day, we will all be given crowns, and covered with the robe of righteousness of our Lord.</p> <p>Just as Paul said in <b>2 Timothy 4:7</b> "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."</p>
<p><b>25</b> "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.</p> <p><b>26</b> So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.</p> <p><b>27</b> 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.'</p> <p><b>28</b> "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.</p> <p><b>29</b> 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.</p> <p><b>30</b> But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'</p>	<p>Under the righteousness of God the younger son is now forgiven. However the older son is not, due to trying to establish his own righteousness. He shouldn't be boasting for doing what was right to do? The older son is behaving wrongly and disobedient just like the Jews that Jesus is addressing. Paul the Apostle said of Jews in <b>Romans 10:3</b> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.</p> <p>The older son is also like the Pharisees in the <b>The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18:9-14</b> <b>9</b> Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <b>10</b> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <b>11</b> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <b>12</b> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' <b>13</b> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <b>14</b> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." So the younger son becomes justified and exalted by God.</p> <p>The older son felt threatened. He is no longer the centre of his Dads attention. He should have been joyful; even if only for his Dad - whose younger son is back! His Dad pleaded with him to join the celebration. By refusing, he had exalted himself and disrespected his Dad at the same time. The older son looked righteous outwardly, but clearly appearances can be deceiving. Just as Jesus taught us that "<b>to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.</b>"</p>
<p><b>31</b> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.</p> <p><b>32</b> 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.' "</p>	<p>Indeed, if we are truly with our God our Father then we have an eternal inheritance that we are free to share in.</p> <p>The older son was speaking as if all that belonged to the Dad was his own. But it was only to be his inheritance which at this time is shared with his Dad. Remember "The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard?" <b>Jesus said in Matthew 20:15-16</b> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' <b>16</b> So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen." But also the older son at any time could have taken of the flock as he pleased. But he chose by himself to be distracted and busy working!</p> <p>Mary and Martha come to mind. Martha who complained to Jesus when she was so busy working and serving, had become upset and angry toward her sister who did not work. Mary chose to enjoy sitting with Jesus being in His</p>

presence, with ears to hear him. Martha by serving and giving is commended but she did not have to - she was so focused on work that she is missing the important part. We cannot work our way to salvation and Mary knew that a relationship with Jesus our God is what is most important, to be in the presence of Jesus by whom she is now saved!

**Luke 10:40** But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.”

So at first when reading this parable, we might think it is the youngest son that is totally lost. But on deeper reflection we see it is the older son that is in greater need of salvation. Although the younger son left to partake in the world and then returned redeemed, it is the older son that is actually more worldly, he remained for physical possessions, benefits, status and power. He still has lessons of his own to learn. Despite appearing righteous outwardly, having done the right things, staying alongside his Dad to do the work, he actually has little or even no light within him, the Holy Spirit seems absent and his heart is cold and therefore inwardly, he is in poor condition and possibly unsaved. Outwardly he has been a good and faithful servant but inwardly we can now see his cup is not clean. He has no relationship with His Dad and does not rejoice for His Brother. He is focused on himself and works.

The Pharisees can represent the older Brother. Jesus said to the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:26-28** Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Again, Jesus tells us in **Matthew 19:30** “But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

As it appears in this case, the younger Brother is first in being saved. Appearances can be deceiving and we should rejoice when someone who was lost has been found - for they now have eternal life.

Who is our Brother and sister? Jesus said in **Mark 3:33-34** ““Who is My mother, or My Brothers?” 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My Brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God is My Brother and My sister and mother.” and the Will of God is that we believe upon the Son, Jesus. So all believers are our Brothers and sisters!

So, going back to the Parable of the Lost Sheep, when the Pharisees complained to Jesus, saying, “**This Man receives sinners and eats with them.**” The Pharisees should have been rejoicing that sinners had ears to hear and sat with Jesus and that He received them. They should have viewed the sinners as Brothers that have been saved...

The same is true for the Older Son, he should have rejoiced with His Dad and His Brother, for his Brother returned and was saved - let us rejoice with God and all of Heaven whenever we witness someone lost now found and saved.

*Ultimately, I believe the point in this story is teaching forgiveness for one another, but more importantly that if we go astray from our God, if we become lost then our God our Father will continue to seek us, and if we are humble and admit our sins and repent, we can return to our God our Father with a true heart, then our God our Father will welcome us and forgive us.*