

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-24

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INTRODUCTION

- A. I always count **it** a deep delight and high honor to come to Camden and speak on this lectureship as I have done many times in the past. Genuine thanks for this invitation.
- B. Luke 15 is a precious, powerful and profitable parable chapter with a lost sheep, coin, son away from home and son at home.
- C. The lost sheep represents one who knows he is lost but does not know the way back to the shepherd and the flock.
- D. The lost coin represents the one who does not know he is lost and must be sought, found, informed, **persuaded** and reclaimed.
- E. The lost son away from **home** knows he is lost and knows the way home.
- F. The lost son at home does not know he is lost and refuses all information supplied and entreaties extended for his reclamation.

I. NAMES, TRIBUTES AND DESCRIPTIONS GIVEN THIS PARABLE.

- A. The parable of the prodigal son.
- B. The parable of the lost son.
- C. The parable of the wonderful father.
- D. The pearl of the parables.
- E. Dickens called it the most beautiful story in our language.
- F. Precious because it has the home for its setting.
- G. No mention made of a mother. Elaborate on this.
- H. God chose a father's **love** to set forth His own affection for the lost.
- I. Men and women en masse do not appreciate the love of a good, godly home. Neither the younger son at first **nor** the older son at the last **did**.

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J. Memories of a home helped reclaim the younger son; they were not that meaningful to the older son. Relate a story from the War Between The States during the 1860's.

II. WHO ARE REPRESENTED BY THE FATHER AND THE TWO SONS?

- A. Nearly all will say the father represents God which is correct.
- B. Some say the two sons represent Adam (prodigal son) and Christ (elder son). Refute this.
- C. Some say elder son represents the Jews and the younger son represents the Gentiles. Refute this.
- D. Verses 1 and 2 provide the answer as touching representation.
 - 1. The elder son represents the Pharisees and scribes who were enraged that Christ ate with sinners and received them.
 - 2. The prodigal son represents publicans and sinners who were receptive to Christ and with whom He ate and accepted them as penitent recipients of His marvelous mercy and saving offers.

III. SICK OF HOME: DEPARTURE TO FAR-OFF COUNTRY OF SIN.

- A. Younger son requested of the father his portion of the family estate. He, by Mosaic legislation--Deuteronomy 21:17--only received one-third; the older son received two-thirds. The implored father acquiesced and made the division between both.
- B. Soon he left home, father and family going where his heart had been for sometime--the far-off country of sin.
- C. Here was a land of license, a realm of no restraints, a place of pleasure and the perfect place to sow wild oats.
- D. He spent all and famine descended. There is no real prosperity in a sinful lifestyle, in low living. In fact, this is not real living at all. It is death in sin (Cf. 1 Timothy 5:6).

- E. He learned rather quickly that there are no promotions in sin. They are all demotions.
- F. He learned that fair weather friends forsake the money dispenser when all financial funds are depleted.
- G. The realm of sin is the land of want, poverty, deprivation and **loneliness**.
- H. He forced himself on a hog farmer--glued himself to the reluctant owner. There is no mention that he was even hired.
- I. This was the bottom of the barrel for a Jewish son. Swine were unclean animals under the Mosaic system. They did not even name hogs as they did sheep calling them those other things.
- J. He desired hog feed and even this, apparently, was denied him. He was about as low as a Jewish son could fall.
- K. He came to himself which implies he was not at himself, no sinner ever is, while groveling in degradation.
- L. Memories of home, once so distasteful and even hated, now flood his tormented soul and heavy heart.
- M. What he resolved to do and ~~what~~ he resolved to say upon his return to the father.
- N. Now he is homesick which is a bold contrast to his former **sickness** of home and family.

IV. THE JOURNEY BACK AND THE FATHER'S RECEPTION.

- A. Had his confession ready. We wonder how many times he may have rehearsed it on the road home.
- B. He arose and returned home.
- C. The father saw/and ran to meet **him**. Will God run? He will in meeting a returning prodigal.
- D. His partial confession. Not allowed to finish it all.

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E. The father's generous reception of him.

F. The robe, ring, shoes and the fatted calf all tell a vivid story of heavenly forgiveness.

G. Lost and now found; dead and now alive--what bold contrasts.

H. Merriment reigns in the joyous household.

I. Yet, the story does not end on a happy note as verses 25-32 relate and which will be discussed in the next lesson I give.

V. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS PRECIOUS PARABLE.

A. The prodigal anticipated receiving kicks from his sins in the far-off country; instead he received the kickbacks of sin.

B. He found out that sin took him farther **than** he intended to go, kept him longer than he intended to stay and cost him far more than he planned initially to spend.

C. There are no harvest failures in a crop of sowing wild oats.

D. There is no way out of sin's entanglement except repentance and doing what is right--for the alien it is gospel obedience; for the erring child of God it is honoring His second law of pardon.

E. God loves the sinner, seeks him and receives him when he is obedient.

F. Superficial friends forsake when the money vanishes from the free spender. They then look for another foolish spender.

G. The hogpen of shame is in the future for everyone who abandons right and pursues wrong.

H. The righteous rejoice when there is redemption of an alien and the reclamation of an erring child of God. The Godhead and angels in heaven also rejoice.

CONCLUSION. This parable is rightly styled The Pearl Of The Parables. Tell of the pioneer preacher ^{who} / preached on this and of audience response.