

TITLE: LESSONS FROM THE PRODIGAL SON

TEXT: Luke 15:11-32

THESIS: The purpose of this sermon is to learn lessons from each character in this parable. Some call it the parable of the “lost sons.” Usually we think of this parable as a lesson in repentance. But there’s more to it. We’ll learn from each character, including the older son, who ended up being more “lost” than his prodigal bro. (**Eze 18:20-24**).

I. THE PRODIGAL SON – Wrong, but then Right (v. 11-19, 21):

A. *Prodigal* = rashly or wastefully extravagant; expending to excess or without necessity

B. His sins (v. 12-16)

1. (v. 12) He takes what doesn’t belong to him (“Give me what is mine” – greed, selfishness)
 - a. It’s not his yet (not until his father dies). Clearly he values money more than he values his father.
 - b. How sad it is when even God’s church values things more than they value Him (our time, our \$, our family)
2. (v. 13a) He went to a far country – Why?
 - a. Get away from authority (be his own boss)
 - b. Won’t have to answer to anyone – where is your far country?
3. (v. 13b) He squanders his substance with riotous (throwing away, getting rid of) living
4. (v. 14-16) He refuses to repent – in spite of several opportunities given:
 - a. All the money was gone
 - b. He joined (cleaved to) a citizen of this far country. What business does he have doing this? (**2 Cor 6:14**)
 - c. He feeds pigs (which were unclean to a Jew – **Deut 14:8**)
 - d. He is starving (not even as well off as the pigs, and certainly not as well off as his father’s servants)!

C. His repentance (v. 17-19)

1. As bad as things are, he does not accept the idea that he’s gone beyond the point of no return
2. (v. 17) He came to himself; he recognizes his own value to his father, who takes care of his servants.
3. (v. 18-19) Decision: To repent
 - a. I will arise (sometimes getting off our tails is the hardest step)
 - b. I will go to my father (this is what the father has been wanting!)
 - c. I will confess (I have sinned against 1) Heaven and 2) against you)
 - d. I will make no excuses, but will except the consequences of my sin (treat me like a hired servant)
He feels unworthy to be his father’s son (v. 21). *How many times do we feel this way after we sin?
4. (v. 21) Action – He does what he said he would do

II. THE FATHER – Right all along (v. 20-24):

A. Unconditional love

B. He allowed the son to leave (God doesn’t stop His children from acting the way they want)

C. He didn’t go after him (God doesn’t force us to return)

D. (v. 20) He watches and waits, ready to receive his son

1. The son is a great way off, but the father sees him (because he’s waiting & watching, hoping his son will return)
2. He had compassion (because he has unconditional love for his children)
3. He ran to him (the true love of the Father here is expressed; he didn’t just sit there and wait for him to get there – this would’ve left the son wondering how he was going to be received)

III. THE OLDER SON – Right, but then Wrong (v. 25-30):

A. He didn’t leave; He was always there and obedient to his father
(proper action, but improper attitude toward his brother all along)

B. (v. 29-30) Greed, bad attitude, selfishness (same things that had been said about his younger brother!)

C. The younger son’s repentance should’ve been an encouragement to him (**1 Thess 1:8-9**)

D. He should’ve been happy because of his brother’s return (v. 7, 10, 24)

E. **Jam 5:19-20**–not only should he have been *happy* at his brother’s return, he should’ve been trying to bring him back!

F. Christians should always be ready to receive the penitent brother back

G. **2 Cor 2:7-8** – “So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.”

CONCLUSION: Both sons do things that are wrong, but who is the truly negative example in this story? The older son...although he was doing the right thing by being a good, obedient son, he gives us an example of a horrible attitude toward a penitent brother. It is so hard for a brother or sister to repent (**Heb 6:4-6**). Don’t make it harder!