

Rescued to Rescue: God's Heart For You

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Week 1 - For Me?

How God loves you.

Luke 15:11-32 - The Prodigal Son

Leader Teaching Script

Many of us are familiar with the parable Jesus tells in Luke 15.

[Teacher's Note: You can read the whole parable (Luke 15:11-32) here, or reference the verses as they are noted in this section of the teaching.]

A son goes to his father and demands that his inheritance be given to him “right now” **(15:12a)**! Much like the character, Veruca Salt, in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, declares, “*I want it now!*”

The father, amazingly, agrees to this demand and generously gives this abundant amount of wealth to his younger son **(15:12b)**. That son goes off and wastes it all away **(15:13-14)**. Finding himself so desperate that he becomes a hired hand feeding pigs and desiring the slop that these pigs are eating **(15:15-16)**. He eventually comes to his senses and decides he will go home and ask to be a servant in his father's home **(15:17-19)**.

He has his speech all prepared and knows what he will say, but what he doesn't know is his father's heart. The father sees his son far in the distance and runs to him **(15:20)**. He embraces him—refusing to let his son be anything less than what he was, his son **(15:21-22)**.

A gigantic celebration ensues **(15:23-24)**, and the older brother comes home to the commotion, and his father invites him in to join the celebration **(15:25-27)**. The older brother becomes angry at his father for what he lavished on the younger, undeserving son **(15:28-30)**. The

father says all he has belongs to his older son, but they had to celebrate the younger brother's return because it was like he came back from the dead (15:31-32)!

Why is this story called the Prodigal Son?

Well, it's because the son wastes away everything his father gives him, right?

Have you ever looked up what the word "prodigal" means?

When you look it up, you read things like "recklessly," "wasteful," "extravagant," "spending lavishly," or even "abundant generosity". When you look at those definitions and think of this parable, who in the story is more the prodigal? One of the sons, or is it the father? Perhaps the story would be better labeled, "The Prodigal Father." Let's take a deeper look at each person in this story.

[SHOW SLIDE 3]

Person #1 - The extravagance of the father.

We don't need to dive too deep into the parable before we come across a key point that needs to be made. This parable is first introduced in verse 11 with these five words: **"To illustrate the point further..."** - Luke 15:11a (NLT). **[SHOW SLIDE 4]**

What is the point that Jesus is trying to make? Well, Jesus tells two other parables before this one.

In parable one, there is a lost sheep, and the shepherd leaves his 99 other sheep to go search and find the one that is lost. **Who was this parable primarily about?** The shepherd, not the sheep.

In parable two, a woman has lost a coin and focuses all her energy on finding it rather than making sure she doesn't lose her nine other coins. **Who was this parable primarily about?** The woman, not the coin(s).

In both parables, when what was lost is found, the main characters call everyone they know to gather and celebrate that they have found what

was once lost. It is after these two parables that Jesus chooses a third parable **“to illustrate the point further.”**

So what is the point Jesus is trying to drive home? It is not how lost we are or how wasteful we can be. No, **it is how relentless God is in rescuing those He loves who are lost.**

When we realize that the father is the main character of the story and how he chooses to act and respond to both his sons, what we see is just who the prodigal really is after all. The father is the one who appears to be wasteful, frivolous and, yes, even reckless. It is the father who is also extravagant and generous.

This is true *for you*. God, the Father, is so extravagant and generous to you that He gave His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for your sins. And like the father, God was generous to give His son, Jesus, who generously laid down His life for you. Why? Because God loves you.

Jesus said it this way in **John 15:13 (NLT)**,

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

To someone who doesn’t understand this love, what God the Father and Jesus did would be looked upon as wasteful and reckless. And it was all done for you! What generous love that the Father has for you!

I know, I know, you might be asking yourself right now: *For me? This was done for me? Jesus died for me?* **Yes! He did!**

[SHOW SLIDE 5]

Person #2 - The return of the younger son.

While none of us are the father in the story, we all belong to one of two groups of people represented in this parable by the two sons. **The first group** is the younger son who **needs to realize their need to return to the Father.**

The younger son basically tells his father, *“Dad, you are better off dead than alive. Give me what is owed to me, now.”*

Who says that? Who does that? Someone who is selfish. **We are all selfish. All sin can be boiled down to some form of selfishness.** The key to the younger son’s return is these five words...

“...finally came to his senses.” - Luke 15:17a (NLT) [\[SHOW SLIDE 6\]](#)

Like the younger son here, we need to come to our senses, too. When we come to our senses, we realize that what the Bible says is true.

Romans 3:23 (NLT)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because of our sin, we deserve death, but because of Jesus, we can receive life. To receive this gift, we must return to God the Father. **That return or “coming to our senses” is called repentance.** We turn away from sin and return to God the Father. When we return, God is like the prodigal father. He is waiting for us, and when He sees us turn towards Him, He runs to us. Embraces us. And all of heaven celebrates our return to Him.

It is only after the younger son returns home, repenting of his actions, that we see the father doesn’t make his son a slave. He gives him back his place as his son. God the Father does the same for us. **We become heirs to everything Jesus has** (Romans 8:17).

This is for me? Yes, this is all for you!

[\[SHOW SLIDE 7\]](#)

Person #3 - The response of the older son.

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