

The Stories Of Jesus Part 6

Fathers & Sons

Luke 15:11-32, Matthew 21:28-32

Memory Verses: Luke 15:33

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

I was not the easiest son to raise, let's just be honest. I gave my single mother a run for her money to say the least. One time I tried to stab my brother with a butter knife. One time I threw the push mower into the woods. Whether I was being a complete jerk or if I was just being my usual sarcastic brat self, my mom would always say this phrase; (and it's probably a phrase you are also familiar with if you were anything to your parents like I was to my mom). She would say, "I hope you have a kid just like you so one day you will know what it's like."

Well guess what... she was right. 16 years ago God gave me a son and we named him Canaan because we felt as though he was a promise to us from God. He was our promised land, or promised son if you will. And I had no idea how much I would grow to love him and care for him or just how much like me he would become, but each year he gets older and each year he becomes more like his dad. Is he a challenge at times, you bet, but aren't we all. But I am so proud of the man he is becoming. In fact I couldn't be more proud of Canaan or any of my children. They truly are a blessing I don't deserve. Being a father to my 5 children has been one of the most rewarding journeys I could have ever taken in this life.

We're in a series about The Stories of Jesus. We've looked at stories about weeds and seeds. We've looked at stories about the kingdom of God. We've looked at stories about the leaven of the pharisees and wicked tenants. But today I want to share with you two parables about Father's and Sons.

It's not easy to be a father, and it's not easy to be a son. Let me be the first to say that I make plenty of mistakes as a dad. There are times I shout too much, and there are times I let my kids get away with murder. It's a constant balancing act trying to be a dad. You want to be loved but you also have to train and discipline. And sons want to love their fathers and find favor in their eyes, but they also want to stretch their wings and the boundaries of their freedom at every turn. And because of this there is often great tension between Fathers and Sons.

Today we want to explore that tension and see what Jesus says about things like obedience, rebellion, forgiveness, and grace as it pertains to the Father Son Relationship. And, what I'm hoping you walk away from here today with is an understanding that **Praise God For**

Sons Who Come Home And Fathers Who Welcome Them With Open Arms.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here today is... **Prodigal Sons May Fall Away But The Love Of The Father Is Unconditional.** Let's look at the first part of the parable of the Prodigal Son. Read with me in **Luke 15:11-24.**

First, there is a couple obvious things to note here concerning sin. For one, we see that a common element of sinfulness is a demand now for what otherwise might be established later. The prodigal son couldn't wait, he wanted his inheritance now. He couldn't wait for the Father to give it to him later, he had things he wanted to experience and he wanted to experience them now.

We are not different. The father tells us to wait to have sex for marriage, but we don't want to wait so we engage in frivolous sexuality. The father teaches us to work hard for long periods of time to establish our wealth, but we don't want to work hard and work long. No, we want it now so and so we steal it from others. The father tells us to find joy and contentment in a well established relationship with him, but we can't wait for that. We want happiness now so we find it in the quick fix pleasures of this world; alcohol, entertainment, social media. Listen, **A rushed, living in the moment, self indulgence, may be the preferred method of today's youth, but it almost always leads to destruction.** Fathers, please teach your children patience and self-control. Good things still come to those who wait.

Another thing we can note about sin here is that sinful living always leaves you broken and empty. Sin is fun for a season but then you have to live with the consequences. Reckless spending leads to being poor. Substance abuse leads to addiction and sickness. Promiscuity leads to abortion, child abandonment, sexually transmitted diseases, and broken marriages. In the case of the prodigal son, it led to him being homeless and destitute. In most cases it merely leads to depression and a life long pursuit of something to replace the lingering pain in your soul. You may not be in the literal pig pen, but mentally you can't escape the mud. Fathers, I beg you, don't just give your children rules, but teach them the spiritual principles behind those rules. Show them how Biblical principles leads to a healthier happy life.

The third thing to note here about sin is that the only way to escape it is through repentance. A broken and a contrite spirit the Lord will never reject. It's interesting to me how many people I see living in sin, being destroyed by sin, depressed and destitute, yet they never are broken to the point of repentance. Sometimes I pray that they would finally hit that wall. Why? Because the only way to be restored from the consequences of sin is to be broken over our sin, and repent. We must confess our sin and turn

from it. Our prayer must simply be; “father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am not longer worthy to be called your son.” And when we do this the father responds.

Notice how the father responds in this parable. Instead of rejecting him, instead of lecturing him, instead welcoming him back with a list of rules which must be adhered to... he treats him like royalty and throws him a party. In our day of entitlement, cancel culture, and holding grudges, this is a surprise to be sure. This act of love shows us that though there are concerns about what a second chance may look like, the father's affections for his son completely transcends his reservations. In sin he was dead, but in repentance he is now alive again. Nothing else matters except that he has come home. We call this unconditional unreserved love. The father's love for the son is unconditional; meaning, the son doesn't have to live according to some conditions in order for the father to love him the way he does. No matter what he does he is always welcome home.

There are two things that should be applied here as it pertains to us today. First, as it applies to the fathers here in this room; your kids are going to mess up. They are going to sin and do things that make you mad or break your heart. How you respond will determine how easily the situation is fixed. If you show anger, if you yell, if you make unreasonable demands, if you make impossible ultimatums, you may just push your children away. But, if you teach, train, and discipline with unconditional love, you always keep the door open for restoration.

Secondly, as it applies to our heavenly Father; **there is literally nothing you could ever do that if you repent, God will not welcome you home.** There is no sin too great that the Father won't forgive you and restore you. You may feel as though you have done some pretty awful stuff in this life, it doesn't matter. God's love for us is unconditional. Put your trust in his son, repent of your sins, and you will be made whole. You were lost but now you are found... let's celebrate. **Praise God For Sons Who Come Home And Fathers Who Welcome Them With Open Arms.**

The second thing I think we need to see here today is that... **Faithful Sons May Become Jealous But The Grace Of The Father Is For Everyone.** Let's finish the parable by looking at the Jealous Son. Read with me in **Luke 15:25-32**. Now, can you relate to the anger of the oldest son? It's very possible that we may have felt the same way. In fact, you've probably been in a similar situation and reacted accordingly. We may ask, how does this look like justice? Doesn't he have to pay a penalty or be punished for what he has done? Why has no party been thrown for us for our faithfulness while you throw a party for someone who has lived unfaithfully?

While this reaction is common and somewhat understandable, it is wrong. This son is missing the point. There are three things he's missing. First, he doesn't recognize that the father's love for the prodigal son, and him are the same love. Yes the expression of love may look different, it's the same love. He misses this because he wants the father's love to be conditional in this moment because he wants justice done on his brother. But if he were to be rational he would understand that the father has not been conditional with him, otherwise, because we all sin, he would be under judgement as well. We've all sinned and fallen short. We have all been shown mercy. Though the father's love for the prodigal was shown through the party, the clothing, the ring, and the food, the father's love for the jealous son is shown everyday. The jealous son lives well everyday. He eats well everyday. He is clothed well everyday. He enjoys the benefits of a relationship with the father every single day. **Listen, It's hard to be jealous for the love of the father, when you live in the love of the father everyday.**

Secondly, he doesn't recognize that the prize is the same. The prize isn't the party, the clothes, the ring, or the food... the prize is the Father. The prodigal son has come home to again be in a relationship with the Father. The jealous son has always lived in a relationship with the Father. Look at vs.31 again; “son you are always with me.” The true prize is a relationship with the father and he's been enjoying it all this time.

Lastly, he doesn't recognize that his sin is the same. The jealous son's sin is his self-righteousness and pride. This sin is equally as revolting as the more obvious sins of the prodigal son. Yet the grace of the father extends to each of them. The self-righteous arrogance of the older son and the self-indulgent immorality of the younger son are both forgiven and covered by the love of the father.

Again, there are two things that should be applied here. For the fathers in this room; please conduct yourselves in such a way that your children desire a relationship with you. Love them so much that they can't stand to be away from your love. But, even more importantly, for all of us, we should never be resentful or jealous of those who come and repent. Don't pull a Jonah, who was frustrated with God when Nineveh repented and went and sulked under a withered tree. Rather, we must recognize that we are all sinners in need of salvation, and everyone who finds forgiveness is a miracle. Celebrate every prodigal that comes home, and remember that you always have the prize of a relationship with the Father. **Praise God For Sons Who Come Home And Fathers Who Welcome Them With Open Arms.**

The last thing I think we need to see here today is that... **The Father Is Patient As He Knows Legitimate Sons Will Eventually Submit.** Let's shift gears a little bit and move over to another parable also involving a father and his two sons; aptly named, the parable of the two sons. Look with

me in **Matthew 21:28-32**.

Here we see two sons. One says he won't obey his father, but then changes his mind and does. He represents those who at first reject the message of Christ but then eventually repent and submit to his salvation and Lordship. The second son said he would obey but then didn't. He represents those who claim to be followers of Christ with their religion but their lives don't reflect that.

The point of the parable is clear. True beliefs are responses tested by time. Each of the sons in this story responded immediately to their father's request. As it turned out, their first answers were meaningless. Each changed his mind; What they finally did and said mattered most. Those considered farthest from God (prostitutes and tax collectors) were boldly embracing his grace. Meanwhile, those most familiar with God were rejecting the promised Messiah. Jesus didn't close the door of the kingdom to the religious leaders, but he challenged their assumed citizenship. In layman's terms, God desires obedience, not lip service.

The Life Application Commentary points out four lessons that flow from this story. One, those who accept or reject the Gospel too easily will be tested. Your first response to the Gospel is not the final word on the issue. Two, regardless of how we came to Christ, our present state of obedience indicates our spiritual health. You may have at one point said no, but now you are following. You may have at one point said yes, but now your not. It's not what you say, but what you do that counts. Three, people who resist the gospel may be closer to conversion than those who are familiar with it. Just because you grew up in church doesn't mean that you are saved, just as those who grew up in the world doesn't mean they aren't. And four, where God is at work, we should not jump to conclusions. Let God do his thing in the streets, in the shadows, in the bars, in the gentlemen's clubs, and on the corners.

Listen, The father is patient, waiting for us to come and repent. He doesn't take us at our first word. He doesn't believe in first impressions. He is a God who patiently waits for us. He is a God of last words and last impressions. **It doesn't matter who you were. All that matters is who you are now in Christ!**

Again, there are two applications. For the fathers in this room, be patient with your children. They may seem out of reach at the moment, but be assured God may have other plans. Let the Holy Spirit do the work that you can't! For all of us, don't let the sin of the past or the sin of this morning keep you from coming to Christ. Now is the time for forgiveness. God has been waiting for you to come home. So come home today. And for those of us who think we've got it all together and are good with God. We should re-evaluate our relationship. Do we talk a good game but fail to submit to him daily? Today is also the day for us to

repent and renew our relationship with our Father. **Praise God For Sons Who Come Home And Fathers Who Welcome Them With Open Arms.**

Application

I hope every father here today can take some pointers from these parables. Be patient, be gentle, and let your love for your children be unconditional.

Conclusion

But of course the message transcends our earthly relationships. We have a good good father who loves us all as sons and daughters. There is no where you can run to that God can't see you. There is no sin you can commit that is too great for him to forgive. There is no lifestyle that you can't return from. Come home to him today. He's been waiting.