

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Salvation

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Prodigal Son

Reading:
Luke Chapter 15: 11- 32

1. Introduction

The parable of the Prodigal Son is as much a reflection of **Jehovah's** (Yahweh) character as it is that of the salvation of wayward sinners. It shows the Almighty as He really is and not as many people see Him. The Holy One of Israel, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is often looked upon as a harsh, dictatorial monarch who rules the universe with cruel severity: a person who never laughs and who finds pleasure only in the subjection of others. In actual fact **Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** is a Being of infinite love, compassion, mercy, generosity, patience and kindness. He is referred to by the Saviour as **OUR FATHER!** His love for His children - you included - is beyond anything we can imagine. This parable briefly explains a side of His character which is unknown to the vast majority of mankind.

To begin with let us never forget that Yahweh's love does not depend on a person's performance - becoming greater when one is good, and growing cold when one is evil. **Our Father's love for the human race is the same today as it was when He first created man. His love for us wayward humans never changes. It is constant.** To be sure the Almighty is pleased, very pleased, when His children are obedient and do His will: and He is saddened when we go astray and break His commandments. But, whatever our performance, His love for us remains constant.

This vital fact should never be forgotten. I repeat: **God's love for us is constant, it never changes.** His joy or sadness may rise and fall depending on our behaviour; but His love never changes.

2. This Man Receiveth Sinners

Yeshua (Jesus) came to earth to accomplish certain objectives, one of which was to dispel man's warped opinion of the Most High and to reveal His Father's true character. Yahweh's character is perfectly reflected in His Son's behaviour. The Bible says of the Saviour:

Luke 15: 1: *"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.*
2: *And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.**"*

The parable of the prodigal son is an expression of Yahweh's character trait. **Our God receiveth sinners.**

3. Freedom from Authority

We humans object to authority, to someone telling us what to do, and what not to do. From early childhood to the day we die, all of us are under some form of control: first by our parents, then by our teachers in school, then by our employers and all the while by governments which rule over us. *Do this, do that, come here, go there.* The stream of orders never seem to end no matter where or how long we live. Necessary though this control is, most of us find it tiresome. The prodigal son was a typical example. He had had enough of his father's control and he longed to get away from it. The story begins:

Luke 15: 11: *“And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.
And he divided unto them his living.”*

4. Riotous Living

Freedom, in theory at any rate, is a wonderful thing. You are in charge. You do what you think is best - for you. No rules, no regulations, no one breathing down your neck telling you what to do or what not to do. The prodigal son, we are told, ***literally went on a wild spree.***

Luke 15: 13: *“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there **wasted his substance with riotous living.**”*

It's not difficult to imagine the scene: wild parties, booze and brothels. The prodigal indulged himself to the full. There was no stopping him.

5. The Mighty Famine

It was great fun while it lasted. New friends and pretty girls flocked to his side. He was young, rich and probably good looking too. The music played, the wine flowed and so did the money. ***This was life!*** he thought. ***This was freedom! This was what he had wanted all along! This was fun!*** But he was in for a shuddering shock: which he didn't expect would happen so soon. His money ran out; and to make matters worse ***a mighty famine*** arose in the distant land to which he had fled.

Luke 15: 14: *“And when he had spent all, there arose a **mighty famine** in that land; and he began to be in want.
15: And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; **and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.**
16: And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: **and no man gave unto him.**”*

6. No Help from Man

When one is rich and prosperous, friends abound. There is no shortage of folk ready to help you spend your money. It is the same today in every country of the world. Rich people have no shortage of friends. But life is very different when you are poor and in need. So-called friends tend to keep away and, if you've lived it up, you are often treated with silent disdain.

Here we have a bankrupt foreigner, one who had gone through a lot of money in a short time. He has no friends, or relatives near by to help him, and no **state handouts** to fall back on. The Bible says:

Luke 15: 16: *“...and no man gave unto him.”*

This young man was bankrupt. He took a job keeping pigs, but the job wasn't bringing in enough money to even feed him. He was desperate, alone, starving and terribly unhappy. And **'no man gave unto him.'** No doubt he had gone around to his former associates asking for their help; but the story was always the same.

'Sorry pal, but I cannot help. You know how bad things are these days. Come back another time.'

7. He came to Himself

But now we come to a turning point in the story; possibly the most important event that took place in this young man's life. **It was the realization that He was in a bad way.** He began to compare his present condition with his days in his father's home. The Bible says: **'He came to himself.'** As he sat in that stinking pigsty he considered his sad and filthy state. And this is how his thoughts were recorded:

Luke 15: 17: *"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and **I perish with hunger!**"*

*18: **I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,***

*19: **And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.***

*20: **And he arose, and came to his father..."***

Notice the following:

- He had - possibly for the first time ever - **correctly evaluated his pathetic condition** and how that even his father's servants were better off.
- That **he had sinned against a.)** Heaven, that is against Yahweh his Heavenly Father and **b.)** against his earthly father.
- He then passed sentence on himself. **a.) I am no more worthy to be called thy son. b.) Make me as one of thy hired servants.**

Oh what humility and courage is here displayed! Having taken so difficult a decision he then set forth to carry it out.

Luke 15: 20: *"**And he arose and came to his father..."**"*

8. Safe & Sound

It is now that we see the Father's true character. No cruel retort: **'I told you so.'** **'So you've come back at last have you!' 'You thought you knew better; but it's obvious you didn't!'** There was none of that in the father's mind. No anger, no recriminations whatsoever: only love and compassion for his wayward boy.

The Bible says:

Luke 15: 20: *"**And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.**"*

*21: **And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.***

*22: **But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:***

*23: **And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:***

*24: **For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."***

Here we get a glimpse of the character of the **Almighty God of Israel:** of His great love, compassion and willingness to forgive and forget. Here we witness His eagerness to accept every wayward sinner back into the family fold. No matter how sinful a person may be; no matter how rebellious, self-willed and hateful: it makes absolutely no difference whatsoever. **The Almighty God is willing to pardon every repentant sinner that comes back to Him.**

Notice how the father (who represents God) in our story cut his son's speech short. He didn't allow him to say **'Make me as one of thy hired servants.'** Instead he called for *'the best robe, a ring, a new pair of shoes and a banquet.'*

Is that how you see the Almighty God? Do you see Him as a vengeful, hateful, unforgiving dictator who doesn't compare for love, compassion and mercy with Jesus Christ? Many Christians see God in this light. How wrong, how terribly wrong they are. For the fact is, this parable is more about our Heavenly Father's love for His wayward family than it is about youngsters who run away from home and fall on hard times.

Is it possible that someone in this audience is in a similar position to the prodigal son: sinful, friendless, emotionally starving to death - far from home. I am happy to tell you that **your Heavenly Father is on the look out for your return.** But do you have the courage to return to Him. Because, most certainly, He has the love and compassion to accept you back.

9. Summary

This parable has many lessons in it: lessons we all need to remember and apply. I'll summarize them:

- **Do not run away from God.** He's not a selfish dictator as many people make out. The truth is: all His commands are for our good. Do not look upon them as burdensome restrictions.
- **Do not squander your physical or spiritual resources on drunkenness, debauchery and riotous living.** Because you will soon find yourself emotionally bankrupt and feeding on a diet fit only for pigs.
- Remember a **spiritual famine** could devastate a nation in a short time. At such a time, satisfaction can never be found in the pigsty of sin. The only answer is to **come to your senses and return to your Heavenly Father.**
- All you need to do when you meet Him is **to repent and confess your sin to Him.** You could do this in the privacy of your own bedroom. He'll forgive you, have no fear. Moreover he'll welcome you back with open arms and heavens blessing will be yours. Come home dear friend. Come Home!

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

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