

Parables—the Prodigal Son

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Luke 15:11-32.
- B. The main individual in the tale of the Prodigal Son is the forgiving father.
- C. There are three parables in this context—in each, something is lost, and when it is found there is rejoicing.
- D. The prodigal represents an unbeliever. (1 Peter 2:25)

II. The ruin of the younger son.

- A. The younger son did not trust his father's love or goodness—he wanted liquid assets instead of the inheritance to come.
- B. He went from freedom to bondage because of squandering all his money.

III. The reconciliation of the younger son.

- A. The son came to realize that there was no hope in him and only hope in his dad. This is how the Christian is saved—by realizing that there is no hope in him and only hope in Christ.
- B. The father responded by giving the son a robe and killing the fatted calf for him.
- C. This son represents tax collectors and sinners whom Jesus receives.

IV. The self-righteousness of the older son.

- A. The elder son represents the Pharisees.
- B. The elder son is upset at the father's forgiving heart.

V. Application.

- A. The man without Jesus Christ is in a terrible condition—he is lost or dead. (John 3:16)
- B. God loves the individual.
- C. A person becomes a Christian by “coming” to the Father.
- D. We ought to rejoice and not be jealous when someone comes to Christ.
- E. The parable is left open-ended because the hearer is expected to make his own decision.

Application questions:

1. How is the story of the Prodigal Son a reflection of how a person comes to faith? Explain.

2. Why is it important to recognize that the father is the central character in the story of the Prodigal Son?

3. How would you counsel someone who struggles rejoicing when good things happen to other people? Explain.
