**THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SONS – LUKE 15**

Today, we move into one of the most well-known parables of Jesus. It is found in Luke 15 and it is entitled – “The Parable of the Prodigal Sons”. Most see only the first son as a prodigal but in reality, both were. This parable is a part of 3 in this chapter all dealing with the same theme – God’s love for lost sinners. In verses 3-7, we see the Parable of the lost sheep; in verses 8-10, the Parable of the Lost Coin or Shekel and in verses 11-32, the Parable of the Lost Sons or the Prodigal Sons. All three parables show us the love and care that God has in seeing lost people saved. Today our focus will be on the Prodigal Sons. We begin with:

1. **The participants – Luke 15:11 -.** In this parable we see a father and two sons. The father here of course represents God the Father. The youngest son represents publicans and sinners while the oldest son represents the Scribes and Pharisees. Both sons represent both classes of unsaved people – secular and religious. God loves and reaches out to both classes until all light has been exhausted.
2. **The younger son demands his inheritance – vs. 12 -.** According to Jewish Law, the eldest son received a double portion of the inheritance; this meant that the younger son received about 1/3. According to the custom of the day, a son could ask for his share before his father passed. Here we find the youngest son requesting his share of the inheritance. This could certainly represent the attitude of most secular lost people; wanting the pleasures of the world in the present and wanting the control of their lives in their hands rather than God’s.
3. **The younger son wastes it all – vs. 13-16 -.** Here we find the younger prodigal leaving the father’s house and going into a far country where he wastes all of his inheritance on “riotous living”. Basically, he partied it all away. As a result, he had nothing left, no friends and no future. This is what happens when people reject God. They go to a “far country” or a place in life far from God. That place will always lead to ruin, want, misery and no hope. Far too many people learn the hard way about the “far country”. When unsaved people choose to get away from God, run from God and live their lives apart from God, they experience what this young man experienced.
4. **Coming to his senses – vs. 17-20a.** In the upcoming verses, we will see that this younger son “came to himself”; in other-words came to his senses; he finally woke up. Through this awakening, we will see that the prodigal son had a proper estimation of his situation, made a plan to correct it and then actually did.

This prodigal would get his life fixed because he did what was right and needed in getting it fixed. Most unsaved people who run from God and wind up living with the pigs may recognize their situation and even know what to do; the problem then is that they don’t do it. There are no short-cuts to a blessed life. If one wants to get out of the pig pen, he must simply get up and leave; most don’t; even if the pig pen is pounding them – vs. 17-20a -.

1. **The father celebrates the return of his son – vs. 20-24 -.** The father here represents God. Here we find the joy that God gets over the salvation of a lost sinner. We see that in the earlier parables – vs. 7, 10 -. God loves all people and desires all to be saved. God will reach out with as much light as the lost sinner will respond to. If the lost sinner continues to reject God’s light, God will then give them over to what they want – a reprobate mind. Romans 1 teaches us that God will give them “up” to uncleanness in vs. 24, “up” to vile affections in vs. 26 and eventually “over” to a reprobate mind in vs. 28. When lost sinners respond to God’s light, then rejoicing occurs at their salvation.
2. **The oldest prodigal – vs. 25-32.** The parable closes with the oldest son, who represents the religiously unsaved entering the story. We will see that he will be upset with the joyous festivities surrounding the return of his brother. He will also lament on how little his work has gained him. The religious crowd of Jesus day looked down on people who were not like them. They did what they did to earn God’s favor; it never will. While angels and the Lord rejoice over the salvation of lost sinners, the religiously lost do not. They reject God’s grace in favor of their own righteousness. The parable will end with the father explaining to oldest son that he was still with him and his inheritance was his if he wanted it. The lesson here is that religious people generally have enough light to know how to be saved. They could enjoy the abundance of salvation that is offered at the Father’s House; they choose not to. Instead of a relationship with the Father, they desire to earn all favor. Of these 2 prodigals, the worst of the two is the oldest. The youngest repented and enjoyed abundance again, while the oldest held on to his bad attitude and wrong beliefs and enjoyed nothing. The irony here is that the youngest came to his senses in a pig pen and found abundance at the Father’s House while the oldest never came to his senses while in the Fathers’ House and was relegated to his own spiritual pig pen.