



This story is not only talking about the Prodigal Son but it is also talking about the Father. To be precise, it is talking about God as our Father. There are times that we only think of God as strict and angry because He prepared great judgment for sinners. It's very hard for some to understand God as someone who is loving and merciful. This is how God was portrayed in Luke 15.

Luke 15:7 - "I tell you that in the same way **there will be more rejoicing in heaven** over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent (NIV)." Luke 15:10 - "In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God** over one sinner who repents (NIV)." God rejoices whenever there are sinners who want to turn their life around. One sinner who repents brings joy to God. The third story is the story of a son, a prodigal, wasteful son who came back and consequently brought his father joy that called for celebration. I believe heaven is having a party whenever a sinful person decided to change his life and go back to God.

On the opposite side of that, however, were the religious leaders of Israel, the Pharisees and the scribes. They never wanted to be anywhere near the category of sinners. They felt that they would be somehow polluted and made impure if they came into contact with them at all. When they see the prostitutes, homosexuals, gamblers,

tax collectors, they kept their distance. They isolate themselves from the sinners because of their self-imposed holiness. For them they can't understand why Jesus was associating with the worst sinners, the most publicly outcast of people. To them, this was a proof that Jesus was not of God but rather He was of Satan.

Parents Are Remembered...

Now at this point, the father re-enters the story. The father re-enters in the mind of the son. Luke 15:17 - "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death (NIV)!' " Folks, let us face the fact, when we have personal problems, parents are the first ones that will come to our mind. Isn't it ironic that we never think of our parents until we encounter problems in life? Praise God for problems. Through problems, we are forced to remember about God and our parents.

I'm sure the younger son had done everything he could to make sure he kept his father out of mind while he was enjoying. Young people usually don't want to include their parents in the equation when they're having fun. But when problem arises, parents automatically become involved in their problem.

Repentance Begins...

Let us go back to the younger son in the story. He was left with nothing. He's poor and dying of hunger so he comes to his senses. He has a conversation with himself "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death (Luke 15:7b NIV)!" And this is where repentance really started. Repentance begins with an accurate assessment of your condition. It's really important for the sinful person, to come to an honest assessment of his/her own situation. He knows he is in a situation for which he has no resources to get out. He knows he is dying of hunger and no one will give him anything and he's losing the battle with the pigs. It's the end.

And so, he thinks about his father and how many of his father's hired men have more than enough bread while he's dying of hunger. He is ready now because he doesn't have an alternative. There's nowhere left to go. All he can do is humble himself, face his shame, admit his terrible mistake, go back and try to be treated with the same kind of mercy and kindness that he knows his father treats the hired people.

The younger son was broken. He's alone. He's sad. He has nowhere to go. And he believes in his father's kindness and forgiveness. The younger son knows his father too well. This is a picture of one whose repentance leads to salvation. Repentant heart and faith are necessities for one to be saved. Repentance is linked to faith. Do you know the Heavenly Father so well? Do you know that the Heavenly Father is a forgiving God regardless of the gravity of your sins? I'm not saying that we can abuse God's kindness. God's grace has limitations because He knows when you're sincere or not. We don't need to be ashamed to approach Him when we're truly sincere as we ask Him for forgiveness.

The younger son is filled with remorse for the past. He's filled with pain in the present. And he's looking forward to even more pain in the future as he works for years to earn his way back. This is basically the effect of sin.

Sin leads us to be remorseful of the past. It gives us pain in the present. And it results to more pain in the future as you earn your way back. So the next time that you plan to sin, you better think about it a thousand times. Sin affects our past, present, and future.

Good Father Waits...

Now, let's talk about the father. What would a father who's been dishonored do after shameless request and rebellion of a son?

I'm amazed on the respect Middle Eastern people have toward their parents during the time of Jesus. But this is not the case in our time. Disrespect toward parents are tolerated.

Take note that the father did not go out to seek for his son. Though he loves his son so much, though he's longing for his son to come back, he did not send his workers to go out and look for his son. Why? He waited for his son to repent before he started the process of restoration. We cannot restore our children if they are not repentant. Many parents will spoil their kids who rebelled against them without applying any discipline. They will try to give them what they want so they'll stay. They will try to spoil them more so that maybe they'll change and become a better person. However, this often results to more rebellion. If you're avoiding to discipline your kids because of so-called love, you're breaking your children more than you know. Proverbs 13:24 indicated, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them (NIV)."

I want you to imagine the agony and pain that the Father went through while the younger son was gone. The father has been suffering silently for the whole time he's been gone. He's been suffering quietly, loving that boy while he was gone and now that quiet, silent suffering love has become publicly displayed as he runs through the street, bringing shame on himself, to embrace his son and spare him from shame. This is the kind of love God has for us. This is the kind of love our parents have for us. Life is short. Don't waste your life in hating. Spend your life in loving. Love your parents. Love your children.



1.) What do you think about discipline?

2.) Share a time when you have to undergo discipline and what is the outcome?

3.) What did you learn from today's message?