

“Prodigal: The Feast”

Luke 15:17-24 (NIV)

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Today we finish our sermon series on Prodigal from the parable in Luke 15. A devotion sheet for the week that goes along with the sermon is available online as well as at the Welcome Center.

Next week our new sermon series begins. You know we as Christians often say things, sometimes because we don't know what to say, or we think we have to say something “Christian,” and it can often be perceived as what I call Christian-ese. Sometimes it is an over simplification of a complex Biblical truth. Sometimes it makes things more confusing, and sometimes it can be downright hurtful and harmful. So, we say things that are to a degree Biblical, but may not to be the right thing to always say depending on the context. Next week a series entitled, “I Know You Meant Well.” **(image)** We will begin with the phrase, “It Must Be God's Will.” I invite you to invite someone to join us during this series where often used and misused Christians phrases are explored.

So, in our Prodigal series we have looked at Father, The Younger Brother, The Older Brother, and now we look at The Feast. A feast involves celebration. However, I have to warn you that there were 2 that were not to happy about The Feast. The older brother was not happy, and I must say the Fattened Calf was not to thrilled either.

We find that the younger brother “came to his senses.” He realized that he could go home. The hired servants had food to spare and he felt like he was starving to death. I wonder how long it took him to come to his senses. Had he been gone a week? A month? 6 months? A year?

This younger brother certainly had some concerns about going home. Would he be accepted? Would he be loved? Would he part of the family? Now last week we spent time looking at some of the thoughts that the older brother might have had. Today we want to look at what happens when the younger brother comes home and how the Father reacts.

The younger brother has set his mind to go back to his father, confess that he has sinned. In fact, he is willing to be a slave/servant in his father's house. **¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'**

“We're not worthy. We're not worthy. We're not worthy. We're nothing but scum.” That saying and scene is played out in the iconic and classic 1992 movie “Wayne's World.” **(image)** Wayne and Garth are in front of rock legend Alice Cooper and make that exclamation. Certainly, the younger brother expresses that he is not worthy to be in his father's house again. But yet the father says, “Way.” Son says “No way.” “Way. No Way.” And finally, son says “Excellent!” Okay all those are sayings from Wayne's World too...now this is the scary part...I've never even seen the entire movie of Wayne's World. Oh, what you do during sermon preparation.

The Father it says in verse 20 saw him and went to him. I wonder how long the Father had been out there waiting?

How exciting is when children/family come home. When our daughter Jenny was at the University of Florida for a year ½, yes some of my money supported the Gators...she called me on my cell phone. I was talking with her catching up with her on the phone when the doorbell rang. I didn't want to miss anything she said so I kept talking, but said, "Jenny the doorbell rang, hang on let me get the door." So, I have the phone in my hand and go to the door, open it and there is Jenny standing with a cell phone in her hand talking to me. Oh, much rather to see her in person. That trickster. She surprised us by coming home. Think now of the celebration that takes place at Thanksgiving or Christmas when family arrives. Only 86 days from today is Christmas Day! I love Christmas. I remember watching out the window when family would come home for Christmas.

Remember the song, "Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays 'Cause no matter how far away you roam. If you wanna to be happy in a million ways. For the holidays you can't beat home sweet home!"

Cause no matter how far away you roam...if you want to me happy go home. Home sweet home. The loving Father is there. More than looking at the window he is filled with compassion, doesn't wait for the son but runs to his son, throws his arms around and hugs and kisses him.

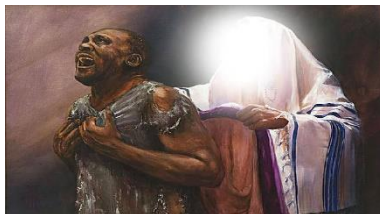
The son confesses his sin, and again says he's not worthy. But the Father doesn't dilly dally along he wants to throw a party. ²² **"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.'**

Let's look at this verse for a while. Notice the word "Quick!" He doesn't say, "Well son, I'm glad you finally came to your senses. Now before I let you in the house, promise me you will never do this again." "Are you going to obey the rules or not?" "Let's negotiate how we are going to allow you back into this house."

Father says, "Quick!" And then there are several things the Father does. 1. Bring the best robe and put it on him.

Now a couple of things. What do you think the son's appearance was? And when was the last time he had taken a bath. Why, he hadn't even used Gilead Deodorant Balm under his arms. He was dirty, smelly, and didn't look like he belonged to the family, but the Father says...Quick, Go get the best robe.

Let's think this through. The best robe. The best robe would have been one of the Father's robes!!! He clothes his dirty, smelly, son with one of his very own robes. **(image)**



Isn't that what Jesus does with us? He clothes us with His robe of righteousness. Not because of what we have done, but because of Who He is.

Isaiah 61:10 New Living Translation (NLT) ¹⁰ I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.

(image)



Clothed with righteousness. But then Father puts a ring on his son's finger. A ring gives the son identity. It very possibly could have been the Father's signet ring. A ring that had the family heritage symbol on it. The Father is saying, "You are part of the family---your identity is with me the Father."

I also think of wedding rings. A wedding ring means that someone is already spoken for. They are chosen. Sarah's wedding ring means she is chosen. I chose her...and man am I glad she accepted...but that's a whole other story. And!!!! Look!!! She chose me!!!!

And then the Father puts sandals on the boy's feet. Those feet that are dirty, been in the pig's trough, feet that more than likely have abrasions and cuts on them now are covered and protected. But the deeper meaning is that in those days all slaves and servants went barefoot. Those sandaled with shoes were family.

The robe, the ring, the sandals. His image, his identity, his identification is that of a child of the Father.

The Father then orders the fattened calf...Let's have a feast and celebrate!!!! Most meals did not include meat. Having meat was an expensive delicacy. In fact, the older brother complained that he never even got a goat prepared for him, much less a calf.

So, the older brother hears the music and dancing. Why who knows perhaps by now the Father has invited the whole village. A full-fledged feast. Party time!!!! Dancing, music, and drinking--unfermented wine of course!!!! ☺

The older brother refused to go to the party. How sad. The Father explains to him why he's throwing a party, why he is celebrating, but the parable/story ends without knowing if the older brother goes in or not. Beloved, don't miss out on the party!!!!

So, let me summarize. I have used this illustration before. It is not original. The last time I used this in a sermon was in June of 2016. You may have come to PHUMC since then, or you may not have been there that Sunday, or if you do remember this---just pretend you don't!!

I call it The Prodigal Son in the Key of F:

Feeling footloose and frisky, a featherbrained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the farthings, and flew far to foreign fields and frittered his fortune; feasting fabulously with faithless friends. Fleeced by his fellows in folly, and facing famine, he found himself in a filthy farmyard. Fairly famishing he fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from fodder fragments.

"Phooey, my father's flunkies fare far finer." The frazzled fugitive frankly faced facts, frustrated by failure and filled with foreboding, fled forthwith to his family. Falling at his father's feet, he forlornly fumbled, "Father, I've flunked. I've fruitlessly forfeited family favor."

The farsighted father, forestalling further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to fetch a fatling from the flock and fix a feast.

The fugitive's faultfinding brother frowned on fickle forgiveness of former folderol, but the faithful father figured: "Filial fidelity is fine but the fugitive is found. What forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled, let fanfares flare." So, father's forgiveness formed the foundation for the former fugitive's future fortitude. Fluke 15. Famen.

The Father says, "I've just GOT to celebrate. My son was lost but now is found...woo-hoo!!! In fact, this son of mine was dead, but now is alive again. Yes, he is alive again!!!!

Oh, friends I want you to realize that you are a:

**C
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W**

Turn to your neighbor and say, "You are a COGPOW." This is not original either, but look what COGPOW means.

C HILD

O F

G OD

P ERSON

O F

W ORTH

No matter how long it's been. No matter how far you've gone. Come home. A celebration awaits.

God never stops loving us no matter how far we run. God never gives up on us. The future begins now.

This is the house of God. We sometimes say, "Our church home." On behalf of God I say, "Welcome home."

<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/30187/welcome-home>