



7/24/26

Luke 15:11-32

On this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, we talked about the call of wisdom and the need to pray and ask the Lord for His wisdom. The horrible thing is, folly is actively pursuing us and our kids to lure us into its trap. The wonderful thing is, God generously gives us the wisdom to steer clear of folly. If you'd like to listen to the episode, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

This Sunday we turn to the topic of Storming the Throne for the Prodigal. This is a gut wrenching topic... filled with grief and fear and frustration. We wish we could control the prodigal into repentance or reason him into repentance... or maybe if we just keep loving by enabling the prodigal, he'll turn. But what we need to start with, as in every situation, is prayer. I don't have the right answers within myself. Truly, without God's help, I become a prodigal, maybe just not an obvious one.

As I look at Luke 15:11-32, I realize that there two prodigals, not one. One is more obvious, but both miss out on the incredible generous love, grace, and mercy that God wants to lavish on us.

The first prodigal... the younger brother ~ Jesus told this parable. He said, "a man had two sons..." The younger was totally apathetic, not concerned about hurting his dad. He just wanted what he wanted when he wanted it, and he wanted it NOW. He said to his father, "Give me my inheritance now. I don't know when you're gonna die, and I don't wait until then."

What did his dad do? Did he say no? Did he try to talk him out of it? Did he offer to let him live a life of debauchery in front of him so that he could try to keep him from falling too deep? No. None of that. He gave him his inheritance, and he let him go. Why? Didn't the dad love his son??? He did. He understood that his son would need to find out the hard way that his selfish desires would lead to nothing good.

How do I know that the dad loved his son? He didn't just write him off when he left to go live in his reckless desires, though he did let him go. And the son did go. He went until he had nothing left and a severe famine threatened his survival. The dad didn't go searching for his son when the famine hit. His son was so bad off that he had to get a job feeding pigs... which any Jew would have been disgusted by, because pigs were unclean and gross. By law, they weren't allowed to eat pigs. No bacon for them!!! And turkey bacon just doesn't cut it. This son hit such rock bottom that he not only fed the pigs, but longed to eat the slop of the pigs.

Was it really so bad at Dad's house? Did he want out because Dad was abusive? No. How do I know this? When the son came to his senses, he said to himself, "I'm starving! But my dad is so good and generous that he provides ample food for his hired servants. Why wouldn't I go back to him and ask if he'd just be willing to hire me? I will go to him and repent. I will say, 'I've sinned against heaven! I've sinned against you! I know I'm not worthy to be called your son... but would you be willing to treat me as one of your hired servants?'"

I'm sure the son rehearsed his speech the whole way home. I don't know how far he had to walk, but he definitely didn't have the money to get a ride. Here's how I know the dad was not apathetic to his son. While his son was still in the distance, the dad saw him and had COMPASSION on him. He did what no respectable Jewish father would do. He hiked up his robe and RAN to his son! He didn't even let him get all the words out! His son's presence was all he needed. He threw his arms around his son and kissed him!!!

His younger son started to give his speech of repentance, and the father cut him off. He said to his servants, "Go! Get my son the best robe, put a ring on his hand, and give the poor guy some shoes! And kill the fattened calf! We're gonna have a party! My son was dead and is alive. He was lost and now he's found!"

The dad loved his son. He didn't enable his son. He didn't try to control his son. He didn't disown his son. He waited for his son. Isaiah 30:18 speaks of when we refuse to return to God and trust Him. It says, "He WAITS to be GRACIOUS to us, and He EXALTS Himself to show MERCY to us." He waits to be gracious, to show us the generosity of His love. He does not wait to condemn us. He exalts Himself to show us mercy, to give us forgiveness and compassion that we don't deserve. He does not exalt Himself to crush us. What's He waiting for? He's waiting for us to return to Him, to cry to Him in repentance.

As the one who loves the prodigal, if I'm going to model myself after the Father, my job is not to try to talk the prodigal out of her ways, but to pray for her to hit rock bottom quickly and repent so that she can be restored. I praise God that when I was a prodigal, He never enabled me... He never helped me stay in my rebellion... but He did let me feel the pain of my choices... and then the moment I returned to Him, He welcomed me home with open arms!!!

The second prodigal... the older brother ~ I think the second prodigal is much harder to recognize as a prodigal and in some ways, has a much harder time returning to the Lord. The

second prodigal looks good on the outside, follows all the rules, but is like the Pharisees. Jesus said to them, "You honor Me with your lips, but your hearts are from Me." This was the heart of the older brother, the second prodigal.

He was in the field... doing his work as he had always done. He came home after a long day of work, and he heard music and dancing. He was confused. "What's going on?" A servant told him, "Your brother came home! Your dad's throwing a celebration because he's back, safe and sound."

Well... the older brother did not say, "Praise God! I've been praying for this day to come!!!" Nope. This closet prodigal was furious, and he refused to celebrate with them.

Did the father ignore his older son? No. Did he demand that he join the party? No. Did he love his older son? Yes. As soon as he heard that his son wouldn't come in, he went to his son and literally pleaded with him to come in.

His son said, "LOOK." Oh, I think there was a finger being pointed at his dad in that moment. "Look! I have always served you. I've done everything you've asked me to do. I've followed all the rules. And never once have you ever given me even a goat to celebrate with MY FRIENDS." Hmmm... this is important for me to see... The son didn't want to celebrate WITH his dad. He just wanted what he felt entitled to... he wanted what he thought he should get FROM his dad. This was not about serving alongside his dad in a sweet, loving relationship. This was about expectation and entitlement.

What happens when someone is serving the Lord for the wrong reasons... when the mindset is, "I'll scratch Your back and You scratch mine"? And then God doesn't deliver as we expect? We say this Christianity thing doesn't work. We turn from God.

The son said to his dad, "I've done EVERYTHING you wanted me to, and I get nothing. But you killed the fattened calf for this brother of mine who devoured your generosity and slept with prostitutes. How dare you!!!" I can just see the daggers coming from his eyes.

Did the father love his older prodigal son? He sure did. "Oh my son, don't you know that all I have is yours? You're always with me. I haven't forgotten you. Don't think that because I care for your younger brother, I don't care for you."

His next statement reminds me of what God said to Jonah when he got mad that God had shown mercy to evil Nineveh when they repented. He said, "Should I not have compassion on them?" The dad said, "It's right that we celebrate that my son has come home... that he was dead and is alive... that he was lost and is found."

Sadly, it doesn't say whether or not the older prodigal son repented or softened. I think it's probably harder when a legalistic prodigal never actually hits rock bottom in the same way a reckless one does. Or at least, he never understands what his rock bottom is. He's blinded by

the appearance of his works.

What I see here, Lord, is that You love both prodigals. You desire to care for both. You have room for both. You wait for both. You are willing to forgive both. I also see that, though You love the prodigal, You do not enable the prodigal. Your compassion cannot be fully realized by the prodigal until he repents. It's not You who holds back Your compassion. It's the prodigal who refuses to receive it.

O Father, I praise You for waiting for me, Your prodigal... and welcoming me home when I returned to You in repentance. The thing is, at the time, I wouldn't have called myself a prodigal. I would have called myself a victim. I treated You as though You had done me wrong, and not the other way around. But it was I who walked away from You. I would bet the legalistic prodigal doesn't see himself as the prodigal either. He acts as though You owe him for his works. And he rejects You when You don't give him what he wants... even if he keeps doing all the same things. But there's no relationship with You.

O Lord, please help me to value one thing above all others... relationship with You. Please help me to grasp the enormous lengths You were willing to go through in order to make a path for me to come home. I am committed to praying for the prodigals in my life as well. I can't control them into returning. I can't demand that they return. I can't talk them into returning. I can't enable them in their sin, pretending that there's no problem. I will pray. You know exactly what a heart needs in order to turn to You in repentance. Please help me to trust You in the waiting. You are a good, good Father.