
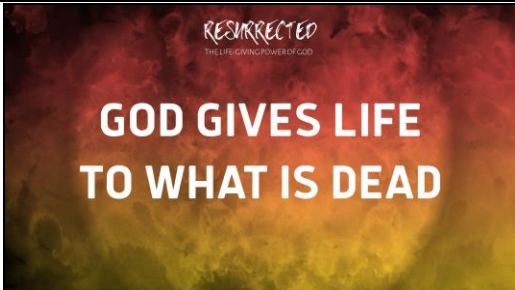




S l i d e 1		<p><b>Prayer</b></p> <p>Welcome to week 3 of our Resurrected series. I chose that video because it resonates especially with those of us who are parents. Parenting is difficult! However, if you're single or married with no kids, this video may well be prophetic. Enjoy these unencumbered years. Some day this could be you. Hopefully we can give you a head start today.</p>
S l i d e 2		<p><b>The theme of this Easter series has been "God gives life to what is dead."</b> I could easily have put together a series of sagely biblical verses and texts and shared some pointers. I almost did, but then I realized that I was missing the point of the series. This is not a series on practical advice on four topics. This series is about Jesus raising the dead things in our lives.</p>



So, I decided that I wanted one biblical story to drive the parenting discussion, a story about a broken parent/child relationship that was brought back from the dead, so to speak. After two days of flitting about from biblical narrative to biblical wisdom literature, I was about to give up. Are you aware of how many examples there are in the Bible about failed parenting relationships? Tons of them! Are you aware of how many success stories there are! Almost none! The few that are cited are questionable... like Adam and Eve. Not sure that the people who first brought sin into the world are the best choice of role models. Others cited Mary and Joseph. Probably true, but we know so little. And during his ministry, Mark tells us that Jesus' family tried to get him committed! Abraham and Sarah? Jacob and his wives? I was striking out. And then it hit me. I was looking at people... imperfect people. Maybe I needed to look at one of Jesus' parables and it hit me... The Parable of the Prodigal Son. And the more I read it the more I became

		<p>convinced that although it is primarily about God’s love for the lost, it has numerous other layers. And as I explored them, I realized that this parable is also Jesus’ Master Class on Difficult Parenting. It’s woven through the story.</p>
S l i d e 4		<p>Our story begins as a tragic tale featuring the</p> <h2>Death of a Parenting Relationship</h2> <p>Turn with me to Luke 15:11-16:</p> <p><b><i><sup>11</sup> And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who</i></b></p>

		<p><i>sent him into his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.</i></p> <p>In this parable we will see one possible parental error. Bear in mind, in this parable Jesus is largely drawing a picture of the fatherhood of God. But we will talk about several parental errors and then some children errors. Here our text will abound with examples.</p>
<div>S l i d e 5</div>		<p><b>One of the key parenting errors is a lack of discipline.</b> Jesus may have built a hint of this error into the story itself. Have you ever wondered why the father obliges his younger son's request? Clearly, the young man had questionable judgment. And in selling off a third of his land, the legal portion given to the younger of two sons, the father has injured his estate and damaged his ability to be provided for in his old age. Jesus goes out of his way, throughout this parable, to weave in unexpected elements.</p> <p>There are more egregious examples in the bible of parents who failed to</p>


discipline their children. In fact, at the end of the period of the Judges, we find two godly fathers who raised godless sons.

Eli the priest had two adult sons who also served as priests, Hophni and Phinehas. 1 Samuel 2:12 describes their character:


***<sup>2</sup> Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD.***

The following verses describe how they earned their bad reputations. They stole meat that wasn't theirs, shaking down those who brought their sacrifices to the LORD and taking more than their allotted portion. They despised the LORD's altar. They also slept with women who were serving at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Eli gives his sons a strong "talking to." These immoral men needed more than a brief sermon. They should have been defrocked. God took matters into his own hands and struck them down. The priestly line of Eli would come to an end.



The second example is from Israel's most godly Judge, Samuel. Samuel


		<p>loved God. However, he was raised by Eli in the tabernacle. He learned from Eli's parenting playbook.</p> <p>Most of us are familiar with Israel's fateful choice to ask for a king like all the other nations. What you might not have noticed is why the people ask for a king. It is because the two sons of Samuel, Joel and Abijah, were dishonest men who perverted justice. Israel rejected them and used their unworthiness as a pretext to reject God as King. This becomes the theme of the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, undisciplined sons who grow to be monsters. Let's look at three other common parenting errors that can destroy the parent/child relationship.</p>
S l i d e 6		<p><b>Just as “sparing the rod spoils the child,” overly harsh discipline does equal damage.</b> Listen to Paul's parenting advice in Ephesians 6:4:</p> <p><b><i>Fathers do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.</i></b></p> <p>I had a neighbor who, every year, threw out all her kids Christmas</p>



		<p>presents in the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Invariably they would disobey in some regard and the punishment was watching Christmas go to the curb. The oldest son became extremely rebellious and even spent some time in jail.</p>
<div> <p>S l i d e 7</p> </div>	<div> </div>	<p><b>One of the biggest parental errors we can make is spending insufficient time with our kids.</b> Have you ever wondered why almost none of the righteous kings of Israel were succeeded by righteous sons? Or, let's move forward in time. How many pastor's kids and evangelist's kids abandon their faith or never commit to Christ at all? You've probably heard Franklin Graham talk about his prodigal years. His reckless living came out of the wound of watching Daddy drive off to another crusade.</p> <p>Be careful of the idea of Quality Time. Kids need Quantity Time as well. Personally, I did OK in this area when my kids were small, but not great. I was present, but I was also out at too many meetings. My kids</p>



		<p>are launching now, and I realize that you can't get that time back. Make the adjustments you need to be present in your home and fully engaged.</p>
<div>S l i d e 8</div>		<p><b>One other major error with no lack of biblical examples is Favoritism.</b></p> <p>Now we don't know whether this was a factor in the story of the prodigal son. Was the younger son his favorite. Is that why the father bows to his wishes? Jesus doesn't explore this. However, the family of Abraham was filled with favoritism. Favorite wives. Favorite kids. It always bred contempt.</p> <p>But let's be honest for a moment. We're human. We bond to our kids in different ways. Lord willing, we love them all. But some are easy for us to love, and some relationships take more work. God rarely calls us to do what's easy; he calls us to do the hard things. Work at finding ways to bond to the children who make it a bit harder to do so. The young child who doesn't clean up their room, or the adult child who</p>



		doesn't return your texts. Don't stop trying.
S l i d e 9		<p><b>One last parental error. PRIDE.</b></p> <p>Nothing is more destructive to the parenting relationship than when the parent gets offended by disobedience or distance and allows their pride to kick in. Pride is acid on relationships. Your relationship with God. Your relationship with your kids and your spouse.</p>
S l i d e 1 0		<p>Now, let's explore some child errors. And here we will find numerous examples in our parable.</p> <p><b>The first is No Self-Discipline.</b> The younger son gets his inheritance prematurely, and then he can't spend it quick enough. Look at verse 13 again:</p> <p><b><i>13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.</i></b></p> <p>Many translations use the phrase "riotous living" suggesting great debauchery. This is possible but not the primary meaning of this Greek</p>

		<p>word. It suggests living large. An example would be bathing your feet in vintage wine.</p> <p>A lack of self-discipline tears down the parent relationship. It also tears the individual apart.</p>
Solid 11		<p><b>Another child error is being overly independent.</b> We're all familiar with the growing problem of children who fail to launch... the forty-year-old living in Mom and Dad's basement playing video games. But there is another problem of the opposite variety... premature launch. Young people, are you counting the days until you can get out from under Mom and Dad's rules and live your own life on your own terms? Some of that feeling is part of growing up. But the desire to leave all the rules behind will get you into the same kind of trouble as the prodigal son! Young people, listen to these sage words by B.B. Barton:</p> <p><i>Youth loves freedom and needs a growing portion of it. But youth needs family, friends, and community too—the solid base that provides identity and support. Are you trying</i></p>

		<p><i>to live your own way, selfishly pushing aside any responsibility or commitment that gets in your way? Stop and look before you hit bottom. You will save yourself and your family much grief. In your young adult years, reach high but keep connections strong.</i></p>
S l i d e 1 2	 <p><b>CHILD ERRORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Self-Discipline</li> <li>• Overly Independent</li> <li>• Entitlement Attitudes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Another key issue that young people are vulnerable to is entitlement issues.</b> The prodigal son behaves as if he deserves a premature inheritance. He wants the money now! Be careful of entitlement thinking. Mom and Dad may be generous but it's not because they owe you anything. Entitlement kills gratitude and feeds another beast.</p>
S l i d e 1 3	 <p><b>CHILD ERRORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Self-Discipline</li> <li>• Overly Independent</li> <li>• Entitlement Attitudes</li> <li>• Selfishness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selfishness.</b> The younger son never pauses to think about the impact his departure will have on his brother, or his father. Both will have to work harder for less money. The father would shoulder some real shame as one who couldn't keep his family together. This was a strong expectation in Jesus' day.</p>

S l i d e 1 4		<p><b>One shared error in family breakdowns is pride.</b> Pride leads to what I call “hardening of the categories.” People dig in and grow stubborn. How many families do you know who have become fractured fairy tales because of pride which freezes all parties in conflict.</p>
S l i d e 1 5		<p>Some families never pull out of the downward spiral of such conflicts. But Jesus depicts a win...</p> <p><b>A Resurrected Parental Relationship</b></p> <p>Turn with me to Luke 15:17-24:</p> <p><i><b><sup>17</sup> “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”” <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran</b></i></p>

***and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.***

We just spent a few minutes looking at family breakdown in a parent/child relationship through both lenses, the parent and the child. Now, I would like to turn towards Healing Moves... the steps we can take to resurrect a dead or dying family relationship. We will look at these together because healing moves must be shared in order to work.



The first healing move is that

- **Someone has to come to their senses.**


This may be one party, although it is often both. Look at verse 17 again.

***17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!’***

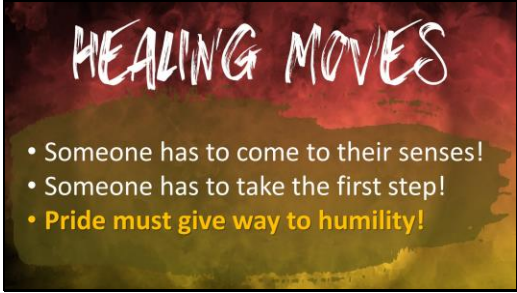
The Greek phrase is literally, ***“But when he came to himself...”*** This is an interesting phrase because it suggests that when we get wrapped up in sinful pursuits we lose our true self. Scottish Missionary, Robert Morrison said:

*In his rebellion and disobedience, he wasn’t himself. “In his years of riot he was not himself. It was not the prodigal who was the real man. The real man was the penitent, not the prodigal.”*

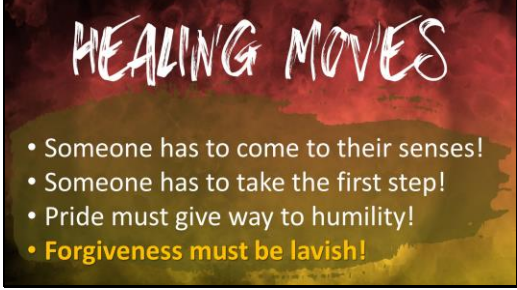
The prodigal son regains his perspective and realizes that he doesn’t have to suffer. He’s not an orphan, he has a loving Father.


		<p>We are not orphans either. We have a loving heavenly Father. How unfortunate that we often needlessly suffer when peace and contentment are only a prayer away.</p>
<p>S l i d e 1 7</p>		<p>The second Healing Move is that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Someone has to take the first step!</b></li> </ul> <p>I was part of a Men’s Bible study called “Men’s Fraternity” when I was in Sarasota. It’s amazing how 60 men will meet at 6 am if you give them a great donut! Actually, it wasn’t the donuts. The curriculum by Dr. Robert Lewis was amazing and the small group interaction was inspiring. One guy in my group shared that he hadn’t spoken to his son in 25 years. He told us why. It was all pretty small stuff but neither party would budge. We gave him some church homework. <i>Call your son and tell us what happens next week.</i> He called and a quarter of a century of silence was broken and the healing began.</p> <p>So, in our parable, who took the first step? The answer is they both did. The son came to his senses, and he</p>



		<p>journeyed home. And before he got to the house, his Father was on the lookout. The best outcomes are when both parties move towards one another and take those critical steps at the same time.</p>
<p>S l i d e 1 8</p>		<p>The third healing step is that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pride must give way to humility.</b></li> </ul> <p>In verses 18-19 we see this dramatic change in the heart of the prodigal son:</p> <p><b><i><sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”</i></b></p> <p>The younger son, the one we call “the prodigal”, acknowledges both the vertical and horizontal impact of his sin. His sin against his father was also a sin against his heavenly Father and he acknowledges it. Notice, there is no but in this apology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No, but you were hard on me.</li> <li>➤ No, but I felt like the spare, not the heir.</li> </ul>

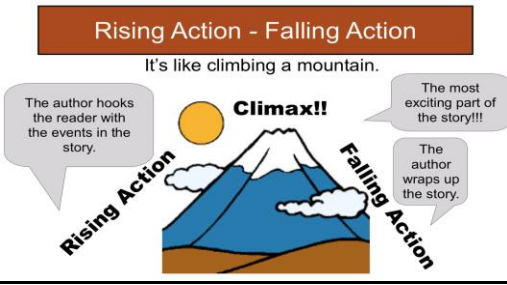



		<p>➤ No, but you should have seen I was unhappy.</p> <p>A true apology is always “butless”! This son of a landowner humbles himself. He is willing to be a slave in his father’s house!</p>
S l i d e 1 9	 <p><b>HEALING MOVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone has to come to their senses!</li> <li>• Someone has to take the first step!</li> <li>• Pride must give way to humility!</li> <li>• <b>Forgiveness must be lavish!</b></li> </ul>	<p>One last Healing Move:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Forgiveness must be lavish.</b></li> </ul> <p>Half-hearted expressions of forgiveness don’t get you half-way home... they get you further away. True forgiveness is lavish. And that is what we see in this parable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father orders his servant to bring his returning son a robe. This long-flowing robe identified him as family.</li> <li>• Then he tells him to bring a ring. This was a signet ring, signifying authority – the authority of a son!</li> <li>• Finally, he tells him to bring him shoes. We could miss the significance of this. Slaves were barefoot. Free men wore shoes. In fact, the whole tradition of taking off your shoes when you enter</li> </ul>


		<p>hearkens back to his tradition, you enter a host's home as his servant. Visitors removed their shoes, family kept them on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And the fattened calf was also a lavish expression of love. This was the calf saved for a very special occasion.</li> </ul> <p>The father pulls out all the stops in order to cement this resurrected relationship with his wayward son.</p>
S l i d e 2 0		<p>We have one more character to explore in this great parable, the older son who reminds us that resurrecting a family is not binary. There are other players. There's also the issue of...</p> <p><b>Managing Sibling Rivalry</b></p> <p>Turn with me to Luke 15:25-32:</p> <p><i><b><sup>25</sup> “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back</b></i></p>

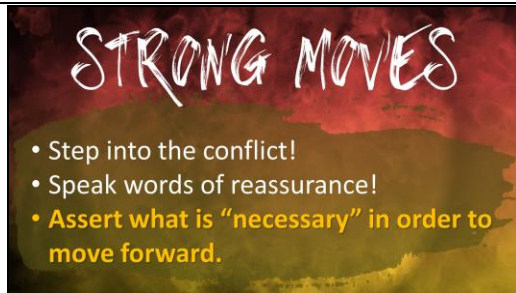
***safe and sound.’<sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,<sup>29</sup> but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.<sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’<sup>31</sup> And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.<sup>32</sup> It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”***

We can’t miss the sibling rivalry between these brothers. This was a challenging hurdle for me to cross with my kids. As an only child I had no tools in my tool belt. I wasn’t equipped to handle the day that Erik came running in from our Lanai crying and bleeding because Deanna bit him in the chest for drawing on her cardboard coloring Blues Clues house.

		<p>In our parable, it becomes clear that the older brother has an axe to grind. He's bottled up a lot of bitterness.</p>
<p>S i d e 2 1</p>		<p>Before we move on, let's remember that this is a parable... a story that Jesus tells. There are three parts to any great story.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>There is the Rising Action</b> where the author hooks the reader with the events in the story.</li> <li>2. <b>Then, there is the Climax.</b> The resurrected parenting moment where the prodigal son asks to be hired as a slave and is received as a beloved son is the climax.</li> <li>3. <b>But there is a third stage to a story called the Falling Action.</b> The Falling Action is the part where the author wraps up the story including issues not central to the climax.</li> </ol> <p>The interaction between the older son and the father introduces an important element. Once again, there are several layers to this story. The main point of the parable is that</p>

		<p>we are sinners and that God pursues lost people and loves them lavishly.</p> <p>The older brother represents the Pharisees who thought they were God's servants, but their hearts were filled with bitterness and judgment. Yet, I would suggest that if we look through the window of this parable also providing us a Master Class on family relationships, then the Father takes three steps intended to address the older son's reaction to the celebration of his little brother's homecoming.</p>
S l i d e 2 2		<p>The Father in the parable takes three strong moves in resolving the sibling rivalry. I share these as three application points that will prove useful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Step into the conflict.</b></li> </ul> <p>Just as the Father is the Father is the first to pursue his younger son, looking out for his return, we also see that he is the first to pursue his older son. He doesn't leave him outside the party and let him marinate in his bitter juices. He approaches him. He steps into the conflict between his sons. Our</p>

		<p>tendency is to step away from conflicts. For me, stepping into conflict has always been like “eating the frog.” It’s the last thing I want to do. But I’ve learned that it is important to step into conflict. You can’t resolve sibling rivalries or broader family conflicts from another room.</p>
<div> <div>S</div> <div>I</div> <div>d</div> <div>e</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div> </div>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondly, speak words of reassurance.</li> </ul> <p>Look at verse 31 more closely:</p> <p><b><i><sup>31</sup> And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’</i></b></p> <p>This was a powerful reassurance. The Father reassures his son that he is loved and that his father will not act unjustly. The two-thirds will not be divided in half. He will receive what his father promised. Many times what fuels sibling rivalry is fear and insecurity. Words of reassurance bring real healing to the soul.</p>




- Finally, assert what is “necessary” in order to move forward.

In verse 32 we read:

***<sup>32</sup> It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”***

I would suggest that the phrase “it was fitting” is somewhat too weak. What the Greek text says is “it was necessary.” This is a much stronger statement. Not celebrating this family resurrection miracle was not an option.

We often fall into conflicts. However, we have to climb out, and that is more difficult and requires real skill. One of the strongest moves you can make in a family conflict situation is to clearly state what is necessary in order to set things right. Think of climbing a rock wall. Fuzzy expectations are like loose footholds; they give way! If you’ve been hurt, state why. Notice, the second son knew what bothered him. But he had no solutions, just complaints. Peacemakers are able to outline a

		<p>set of steps towards healing and growth.</p> <p>I hope these insights are helpful to you. Let me leave you with a homework assignment. If there's some family member you have not talked to in years, break the ice. Write a letter. Make a call. Perhaps there can be a resurrection in your family.</p>
Slide 25		<p>Let's Pray.</p>