Series: Kingdom Come

Sermon: The Prodigal Son

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

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The parable of the Prodigal Son represents the story of the world.

It’s our story. It’s all of our stories.

As I read through this pay close attention. Look for each of these in the story.

* It tells us where we come from, where all good things come from.
* It tells us what went wrong with the world.
* It tells us what is wrong in us.
* It models for us what we need to do.
* It even shows us what the greatest power in the world is like.

Lectio:

The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11–32 (ESV):

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 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. 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. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

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! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.” ’ 20 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 and embraced him and kissed him. 21 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.’ 22 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. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

25 “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 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. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ 31 And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’” [[1]](#footnote-2)

Meditatio:

* There are so many different ways we could approach this text. Myopically we could zoom in on the literary and historical context or each specific player in the parable. Instead let’s take the time today to look at the big picture.
* Sin is not merely a bad decision, it’s a living evil force trying to pull people into it. The little brother and the older brother are portrayed as people whose hearts are coerced away from the father. The younger through rebellion, the older through entitlement. The whisper of sin trains our hearts to define what is right and wrong on our own terms.
	+ In our modern world you hear it in phrases like this: “You do you” o. r “Be true to yourself” or “The heart wants what the heart wants.”
	+ In Genesis 4:7 and John 10:10 sin is portrayed as a prowling predator waiting to attack. The picture is of a person who is hunted unaware. You can’t be surprised by an attacker if you see him long in advance.
* God gives the younger son the rebellion he wanted. If you are set on rebelling against God, he will let you. Humans have freedom and they use it in dark ways.
* God (the Father) is the place where all the beauty comes from and when we rebel, beautiful things dry up. We are made to receive what only the Father can provide.
	+ “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” (ESV) Proverbs 14:12; Proverbs 16:25
* As with the older brother, we can see that it’s possible to count yourself with God all along and still be susceptible to a darkened heart.
* The Father looks for and loves His children.
* The crafty enemy will do everything that he can to convince people of three lies.
	1. I decide what is best for me. I don’t need the Father, his wisdom, or my spiritual family.
	2. I’m really good and deserve better than what God has provided.
	3. I’m too broken or too flawed to come back home.

Oratio

* What is most dangerous to us is not the sin we see, but the sin we don’t. You are most vulnerable when you are spiritually arrogant and alone.
* Where is the enemy working to twist your heart against the Father, his ways, and the Father’s children?

Actio:

Awhile back I was talking with a young leader who was considering leaving the ministry. Why? Because these frustrating church people he works with aren’t working with him. He felt like he deserved better.

I was reflecting on the growing bitterness in him and wondering how I can protect myself from it.

A few days ago I was driving past one of our locations and thinking about how God rescued me from my past life. I am truly made new because of the grace of God. I started to cry as I thought about how grateful I am that I get to be a pastor in Indianapolis with you amazing people. I know I am a sinner saved only by the grace of God. I would still be in a pig's trough without the grace of God. Praise be to God for His mercy and love!

* Humility and gratitude before a loving God is the only way to wholeness.
* Where do you need to silence the enemy and assume a heart of gratitude and humility?
1. The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)