

A Worthy Father

Introduction

Scripture Reading: **Luke 15:11-32**

1. This morning I want to bring to your attention a man who was a good father. We know this man as the father of the prodigal son.
 - A. We heard the story of the prodigal in our scripture reading a few minutes ago.
2. There are at least five characteristics of this father that will be good to examine today.

He Provided For The Needs of His Family

1. In the physical realm:
1 Timothy 5:8
 - A. He was able to provide a substantial inheritance for his sons.
 - B. He could provide a lavish party (v.22-23).
 - C. This implies that he had the means to provide a comfortable living for his family.
2. Spiritual
Ephesians 4:6
 - A. Many think of only “providing” in the physical sense.
 - B. Yet, there is a “most important” spiritual obligation also.

He Was Generous Beyond Reasonable Expectations

1. The text says that he divided to them his livelihood (v. 12).

A. The law spoke of a father giving a gift while still alive.

Genesis 25:6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

B. The inheritance was to come at the father's death with the eldest son receiving a double portion.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17

- 1) While living, the father could dispose of his possessions in any way he wished. If he desired, he could give all his wealth to total strangers.
- 2) While the younger son was entitled to a portion of the inheritance, yet, he had no legal right to claim it during the lifetime of his father.
- 3) Nonetheless, he asked that his portion be given him. The father yielded to his son's request. He divided the younger son his portion. Though it was not requested, he also gave the older son his portion ("them").
- 4) Some question the wisdom of the action of the father. However, we ought to consider what price is there in learning a valuable lesson the hard way.

2. How do we look at the generous nature of our own father?

He Allowed His Son To Make His Own Choice

1. Notice verse 13:

Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

2. One can offer advice, but you can't live their lives for them. One of the hardest things for a father (and oftentimes the scariest) is when you turn them loose. A young boy will not understand this until they become a father.

- A. They may walk to school for the first time (one whole block).
- B. You watch them pull away in the vehicle, alone, for the first time.
- C. You walk down the aisle and give your daughter away.
- D. You watch the truck leave home to travel to a distant city to begin a "new life."

3. These are some of the many hard things for a father to endure.

4. Nevertheless, it is as God has said:

Genesis 2:24

- A. In principle they grow up and become what they choose to become.
- B. Our influence may still be there, but it is very limited.

He Was Willing to Forgive

1. Notice now verses 14-19:

Luke 15:14-19

A. Hardship fell upon this young man and he wised up.

1) “He came to himself.”

2) What a statement. He is the product of the choices he made and he knew it.

2. Let us compare verse 12 to verse 19:

A. “Give” vs. “Make.”

1) A profound change has occurred.

B. Many fathers might have reacted differently.

1) Maybe they would have given him an “ear full.”

2) But this father was overjoyed to see his son and expressed his love and forgiveness:

Luke 15:24 for this **my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.**' And they began to be merry.

He Loved His Sons Equally, Handled Them Differently

1. The older son had remained with the father (v.29).
 - A. He is different from his brother.
 - B. Why didn't he take his inheritance and run off? Wasn't he raised by the same father? Wasn't his life molded by the same hand?
 - C. One of the fallacies of modern child rearing is that of "raising them the same." This means each one receives the exact same treatment.
 - 1) This won't work. Children are not the product of some recipe and stamped out with a cookie cutter.
 - 2) You treat them fairly and love them equally, but you will very likely have to handle them differently.
2. The father knew this of the older son.

Luke 15:31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.

- A. He did not rebuke him for his jealousy, but encouraged him to rejoice as he rejoiced.

Luke 15:32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.

We Have A Heavenly Father

1. Our heavenly Father provides for us!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

2. Our heavenly Father is generous!

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**

3. Our heavenly Father allows us to choose!

Romans 6:16-17 **Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey,** whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

4. Our heavenly Father is willing to forgive us!

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but **that all should come to repentance.**

5. Our heavenly Father loves us equally!

Romans 5:6-8

Conclusion

- 1. In order for the prodigal son to be received by the father, he had to GO to the father.**
- 2. In order for us to be received by our heavenly Father, we must go to Him.**
- 3. I invite you, if you have a need, to please go to Him now before it is everlastingly too late!**

