



Session 5 God’s Love Far Exceeds Your Expectations – Luke 15

I. INTRODUCTION TO “THE LOVING FATHER” PARABLE - LUKE 15

A. Context of the Parable

Luke 15:1-2 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

B. Whom is Jesus Addressing?

1. Tax Collectors and Sinners – represented by the younger son
2. The Pharisees and Scribes – represented by the elder son.

C. What is Jesus Addressing?

Jesus is addressing the accusation against Him from the Pharisees and scribes accusing Him. (Lk. 15:2)

D. Is this the first time Jesus dealt with this complaint against Him?

1. In Luke’s Gospel this same complaint being lodged against Jesus occurs early on in His ministry, when Jesus is calling His 12 disciples.

Luke 5:27-29 He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi... He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then, Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house.

2. Levi himself records what quickly transpired after this.

Matthew 10:10-11 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

3. The religious leaders did not keep silent. They made the same complaint that is seen in Luke 15:2.

Luke 5:30 “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

E. Who did the religious leaders view as “sinners”?

1. The tax-collectors were viewed as being dishonest and greedy Jews, who were working for the Roman government.
2. Those who were immoral or openly living contrary to what was considered right.
3. Even people who had certain disabilities or diseases came under this category of sinners.

John 9:2 “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

F. Religious Leader’s View of Jesus

Because Jesus ate with the “sinners”, the religious leaders viewed Jesus as a compromiser, one who took sin lightly, and in some respects was just like them.

Luke 7:30 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

G. Jesus' Response to the Complaint - *"This Man receives sinners and eats with them."* (Lk. 5:30, 15:2)

1. Jesus' answer to their complaint the first time they spoke out against Him in Luke 5:30:

Luke 5:31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

2. Jesus' answer to their complaint when they spoke out against Him in Luke 15:2

Jesus shares His heart with them concerning the "lost" through three parables (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son) in Luke 15:3-32. The main point of all these parables can be summarized by Jesus' statement:

Luke 19:10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

II. The Father's Extravagant Love Demonstrated to the Younger Son

A. The Younger Son

1. In the parable of the "Loving Father", the father has two sons. The younger son asked to receive his portion of the inheritance early. He quickly wastes all of his inheritance on "prodigal" living in a country far away from his father's home.
2. When all his money is completely gone, a famine arises, which causes him to fall even further from his father's ways.
3. At this moment he remembers that there is *"bread enough and to spare,"* (Luke 15:17) in his Father's house. He contrasts this with His current state and decides to come home to His Father's house.

B. The Fulness of our Heavenly Father's Love Shown to the Younger Son

1. God's Compassion – A demonstration of God's feelings towards us

Luke 15:20 But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

2. God's Mercy – God's forgiveness of all of your sins and not remembering them anymore.

Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

3. God's Grace – God's unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor and blessings

Luke 15:22-23 Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry...

C. Grace - The Royal Wardrobe

1. The son was greeted with the best robe.

Isaiah 61:10 For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

2. The Father gave the younger son the signet ring, which gave him the authority to use His Father's name.

Luke 10:19 Behold I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

3. The sandals of sonship were given. Slaves didn't wear sandals, sons did. (1 John 3:1)

Galatians 4:7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Romans 8:15-17 ...you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."... 17 and if children then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

D. Grace – Invited to the Royal Banqueting Table

1. After fully clothing His son in the royal robes, the loving father prepared a banqueting table.

Luke 15:23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it and let us eat and be merry.

2. You are invited to come daily to partake of "communion" at God's banqueting table.
3. You are invited to come and partake of the fulness of your inheritance in Jesus Christ in the presence of your enemies.

Psalms 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

E. The enemy Tries to Block You from Receiving the Fulness of God's Grace, Your Inheritance in Christ

1. One of your greatest enemies is the voice that tells you that you have no right to put on God's royal garments and to come to God's banqueting table to partake of Jesus Christ and your inheritance in Him, because you are not qualified, not worthy.
2. The voice within is what the younger son said about himself before he received Jesus' love for him.

Luke 15:18-19 "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me liked one of your hired servants."

3. The voice without is what the elder son inferred about the younger son, as he looked at his own qualifications, his own worthiness according to the Law of God.

Luke 15:29 Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.

4. The root of both voices is satan himself. satan wants you to receive his accusations against you, so that you will choose to believe that you are too disqualified/unworthy to receive the fulness of God's grace.
5. What must you remember, when these negative discouraging voices arise?
 - a. You must remember that the King Jesus Himself, gave you His best robe, the royal robe of righteousness, which He purchased for you by His blood, and that through Jesus, God has qualified to receive the fulness of His grace – the fulness of your inheritance in Christ.

- b. You must remember that you are under the New Covenant of God's grace, which is based on Jesus' qualifications, and not your qualification through your deeds of righteousness.

F. Why does Father God respond with such compassion, mercy, and grace when you come home to Him?

Eph. 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

G. Issues of the Younger Son

1. Did the younger son have to work through all of his apparent issues before he received his full inheritance in Jesus Christ? No!

2. Why didn't he have to work through his issues first?

Eph. 2:4 But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love in which He loved us.

3. If you work through issues apart from the power of God's love, there is no lasting results.

III. God Cautions Us Through the Elder Son

1. To stop trying to earn what God has already freely given you through His grace – Jesus' royal wardrobe.

2. To stop trying to earn the right to sit down at God's banqueting table to partake of His love.

3. To stop trying to get what you have already got and to start thanking Him for what you have in Christ.

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

4. To stop trying to earn God's acceptance and love - God's mercy, compassion, and grace - because He has already given it to you. God already gave you His Son.

5. To stop trying to offer the sacrifice of atonement - a sacrifice that is no longer yours to give, because the sacrificial atonement has already been given once for all through Jesus Christ.

IV. Rejoice! Give God Thanksgiving and Praise!

1. Instead, offer God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. (Heb. 13:5)

2. Rejoice, recalling to mind what Jesus has done through the cross for you (Lk. 15:6,8,24,32; Psalm 103:3-5)

1 Thes. 5:16 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

3. An offering of thanksgiving needs to include not only your words, "Thank-You Father", but attitudes and actions that speak louder than words.

4. Your offering to God needs to be rooted and grounded in God's love for you - His mercy, compassion, and grace as shown to you through the cross. So, the best thing you can do now is saturate yourself in God's love, for you as revealed through this parable and abide in it. (1 John 4:16)