***The Prodigal Son***

# Luke 15:11-32King James Version (KJV)

**11**And he said, A certain man had two sons:

**12**And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

**13**And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

**14**And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

**15**And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

**16**And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

**17**And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

**18**I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

**19**And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

**20**And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

**21**And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

**22**But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

**23**And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

**24**For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

**25**Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

**26**And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

**27**And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

**28**And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

**29**And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

**30**But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

**31**And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

**32**It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

**Scripture:** *Luke 15:11-32*

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So he told them this parable:

11 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 falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in  loose living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. 15 So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine 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 bread enough and to spare, 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 yet at a distance, his father saw him and had 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 fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

25 "Now his elder 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 this meant. 27 And he said to him, `Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him 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, `Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I  might make merry with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' 31 And he said to him, `Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

**Meditation:** Jesus' story of the father and his two sons (sometimes called the parable of the prodigal son) is the longest parable in the gospels. What is the main point or focus of the story? Is it the contrast between an obedient and a disobedient son or is it between the warm reception given to a spendthrift son by his father and the cold reception given by the eldest son? Jesus contrasts the father's merciful love with the eldest son's somewhat harsh reaction to his errant brother and to the lavish party his joyful father throws for his repentant son. While the errant son had wasted his father's money, his father, nonetheless, maintained unbroken love for his son. The son, while he was away, learned a lot about himself. And he realized that his father had given him love which he had not returned. He had yet to learn about the depth of his father's love for him. His deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed on the husks of pigs and his reflection on all he had lost, led to his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father.  While he hoped for reconciliation with his father, he could not have imagined a full restoration of relationship. The father did not need to speak words of forgiveness to his son; his actions spoke more loudly and clearly! The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet symbolize the new life – pure, worthy, and joyful – of anyone who returns to God.

The prodigal could not return to the garden of innocence, but he was welcomed and reinstated as a son. The errant son's dramatic change from grief and guilt to forgiveness and restoration express in picture-language the resurrection from the dead, a rebirth to new life from spiritual death. The parable also contrasts mercy and its opposite – unforgiveness. The father who had been wronged, was forgiving. But the eldest son, who had not been wronged, was unforgiving. His unforgiveness turns into contempt and pride. And his resentment leads to his isolation and estrangement from the community of forgiven sinners. In this parable Jesus gives a vivid picture of God and what God is like. God is truly kinder than us. He does not lose hope or give up when we stray. He rejoices in finding the lost and in welcoming them home. Do you know the joy of repentance and the restoration of relationship as a son or daughther of your heavenly Father?

"Lord Jesus, may I never doubt your love nor take for granted the mercy you have shown to me. Fill me with your transforming love that I may be merciful as you are merciful."