**Luke VII Parable of The Lost Son Luke 15:11-32**

**Review Jesus and the Poor (or Jesus and the Rich)**

Luke 6:20,24 Jesus said, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.”

In Luke the “poor” are the marginalized in general. They are poor in things, but also in social capital. This would include the immigrant, the very old, etc.. Therefore the rich are the privileged in general. “The rich are those with significant resources at their disposal, yet who fail to consider the plight of others.” (Joel B. Green)

Jesus’ message: If you seek your comfort principally for yourself in the here and now, you will not receive comfort in the final kingdom of God. “you have already received your comfort.” (v. 24)

**The rich fool (Luke 12:13-23)**

Luke 12:15. “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed!

A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Q: Do you agree with Jesus here? Are you absolutely sure?

1. He failed to account for God in his plans. He found his security on things, rather than in God

2. He failed to account for the poor.

**The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31**

A great example of reversal of fortune in Luke.

The rich man would not even look at Lazarus in his rags, but in Hades, Lazarus is in Paradise.

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God.

**Today we will be looking at the Parable of the Lost Son but..**

Before this, just a little comment. Let’s remember our outline of Luke.

Ch 1-3 Birth Narrative

Ch 4-9:31 Jesus’ ministry in Galilee in which he is teaching, preaching and healing and talking about salvation, especially for the outcast, the foreigner, women, and the poor.

Remember Luke 4:16-29:

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?)

2. Freedom for (spiritual) prisoners

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick.

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed

5. The favor of the Lord.

Luke 9:32-19:27 Jesus going to Jerusalem.

Luke 9:31 is the turning point in the book.

As in Matthew when Peter declared Jesus to be the Messiah—the Son of the Living God at Caesarea Philippi, and the transfiguration happens, after which he made himself toward Jerusalem.

Similarly in Luke 9:16-20 Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, and then the transfiguration in 9:28-30.

Luke 9:31 “They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

Luke 9:44 “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men.”

Luke 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

The die is cast. The end is near. The Savior must die in Jerusalem.

Luke and Jerusalem: Journey to Jerusalem repeatedly mentioned (13:22, 33-34, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, 28)

A

Luke 9:51 A major turning point in Luke’s gospel. Even in this journey to Jerusalem, we still will see Jesus ministering largely to the poor, women and to the outcasts of Jewish society.

From this point on, Jesus still teachers, preaches and heals the sick, but there is ever-growing opposition from the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law.

**The Parable of the Lost Son Luke 15:11-32**

Also known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Wikipedia: prodigal = spending money or resources freely and recklessly; wastefully extravagant.

The *Return of the Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

Some call it the greatest painting ever. Three characters:

The Lost Son

The Father

The Older Son

In “The Return of the Prodigal Son” the two chief characters are the Father and the Son who stayed home. Their characters are more thoroughly revealed in the parable than the lost son.

I. The Lost Son Luke 15:11-20a

In this parable, the Lost Son is anyone who has become estranged from the Father, but in the context it will be the tax collectors, sinners, the dispossessed, Samaritans and outsiders in general whom the Jews saw as prodigal. As evidence, look at the context in Luke 15:1-2, after which Jesus tells three parables, including this one.

In this story, the older son will be anyone who thinks they are righteous on their own merit, and the privileged in general.

A few points:

It is frightfully presumptuous for the younger son (who, by the way, get 1/3 of the inheritance) to ask for his inheritance while his father is still alive.

Imagine the audacity!

Likewise, it is frightfully presumptuous of us as human beings to not obey God and submit to him. Imagine my audacity in my youth!!!

I said to God: I do not need you. I am going to strike out on my own.

Mark Wilkinson: How is that working for you?

His father entrusted him with so much.

Thing about what God has entrusted to you. Life, breath, time, emotions, family, talents, freedom of will, self-awareness, a beautiful world.

And he has given us all these things now, not just in the afterlife!

He totally squandered it all! Like so many of us once did (and some of us still are even now)

When we leave God we go as far as possible—“to a distant country.” (v. 13) in the hope that he will not see what we are doing. (as if that worked!)

In the Jewish context, he went to a Gentile country (obvious because he was feeding pigs)

He was truly and completely lost. He literally ended up in a pig pen. This is where we always end up when we leave God and leave his family.

How low do we need to go before we realize the pigpen we are already in? What will bring us to our senses?

But to return to God, two things are required

1. He needed to “come to his senses.”

Who really loves me? Who has my best interest at heart, no matter what?

John 10: The thief comes to steal and to kill and to destroy, but I have come that they might have life, and life to the full.

2. He needed to return to God.

It’s not complicated. If you have wandered from God in your heart, or if you have REALLY wandered from God, the need is the same. Return to God.

I just finished teaching a class titled “Repent, Return, Restore, Rebuild” We repent and return, God restores and rebuilds.

v. 20a “So, he got up and went to his father.” Some of us need to do exactly that!!!

Luke 15:20b-24 II. The father. In this parable the father is the Father—God!

He did not need to come up with a speech!

Look at the Father

He let you go. He did not try to stop you. He trusted you, even when it was foolish to do so. We all cry out: “Don’t do it!!! Don’t give him his share at such a young age!!!”

What was the only thing he used to bring you back? His love!!!

There is so much theology here

God will always forgive the one who repents. He is waiting. He runs with open arms. He shows great compassion. He does not even let the Lost Son finish his speech. He almost rudely interrupts him. Stop talking. Let me just hold you.

Ring, Robe and Sandals are emblematic of restoration to full familial fellowship.

He throws a big party.

In this story, the “prodigal” one is the Father!!! “a person who spends money in a recklessy extravagant way.”

The outsider has been brought into the fold. Spare no expense!! Spare no effort!!! This son who was lost is now home. We were dead in our sins, but we are made alive in Christ!

This is how God has treated you!!!

Luke 15:25-31 III. The Older Son: The One Who Stayed Home

This son is out working in the fields, serving his father.

This is the truly lost son! Even though he stayed home. This is the son who forgot that his father loves him. He has served out of duty all these years.

Remember Gal 5:6 The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself in love. He knows nothing of this. He needs to hear Gal 5:1. He is loved by his Father, whether he works or not, and his Father wants him to work because he is loved, not in order to be loved.

v. 28 “He became angry.” How could you treat “this son of yours” (not my brother) with love when he so disrespected you?

He has no compassion—only anger. Why? Because, even as a son, he is serving as a slave. My younger brother ought at the very least have a trial period to “test” him.

v. 29 “You never even gave me a goat.”

Reminds me of Malachi. You have not shown *hesed*. Malachi 1:13 “And you say ‘What a burden.’ Malachi 3:14 “You say ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements.”

Father (v. 31-32) “son” All I have is yours… This brother of yours was dead, and he is alive. Jacob have I loved (Malachi 1:2) All I want to do is serve you and for you to offer loving faithfulness to me. All I have is yours!!!

Here God is speaking directly to you!!!!

What is the message of this parable? God will hold out his arms to any and all to be received into his royal family. This is especially true of those many of us would discount as outsiders and almost certainly not likely to come into the kingdom.

Those of us who have been serving God faithfully for many years, need to remember that we are where we are by God’s grace alone and we need to be extending that grace to the lost in general, but especially to those who are seen as far off from God.

Let us come home to the Father and accept his bountiful love.