

Theme: The story of the prodigal son reveals God's heart towards us, and it also reveals two rival conceptions of how we view and therefore experience God.

I. Welcome to Winter Relief Guests & Intro

- A. We are really glad to have you with us
- B. We pray God's blessings on you
- C. Today - one of Jesus' most famous stories
- D. This story contains the heart of the Gospel
- E. This story speaks to each us - no matter who we are

II. The Key Actors In 'Prodigal'

- A. The three key actors (v11)
 - 1. A father and his two sons
 - 2. The relationship between them will be central
- B. A great story with details - but keep the main point
 - 1. Jesus is a master storyteller
 - 2. As such, he gives details
 - 3. But keep the main point - father and two sons

III. The Younger Son

- A. A character sketch of the younger son
 - 1. He is rude & impulsive (v12) - unacceptable then
 - 2. He does not value his father (v13)
 - 3. He is foolish (v13) - a cardinal sin

B. The younger son's ruin

- 1. He is plunged into financial ruin (v14)
- 2. He is forced into a degrading life (vv15-16)
 - a. Feeding pigs - utter horror to a Jew
 - b. He wants to eat with them!
- 3. This is as low as it gets!

C. The younger son's decision

- 1. He comes to his senses! (v17)
- 2. He decides to return home - as a servant (vv18-20)
 - a. He knows he has blown it - sinned against you & God
 - b. Not worthy to be your son - make me a worker
- 3. Good decision - but how will the father respond?

IV. The Father

A. A character sketch of the father

- 1. He is compassionate and forgiving (v20)
- 2. He restores what has been lost (vv21-24)
 - a. Does not let son finish speech - restores dignity
 - b. Receives him as a son - not a slave
- 3. He celebrates the return of lost children (vv21-24)

B. This is a prodigal father!

- 1. He is very giving - even when 'undeserved'
- 2. He loves to restore the lost & heal the broken!

V. The Older Brother

A. A character sketch of the older brother

1. He is a hard worker (v25) - in the field
2. He is obedient (v29) - never disobeyed

B. The older brothers heart

1. His heart is hard towards his brother (v30)
2. He has misunderstood his father (v29)
3. He is bitter about his fathers prodigal love (vv28-30)

C. The fathers prodigal response

1. He doesn't rebuke or disown the older brother (v31)
2. He rejoices over his children coming home (v32)

VI. Applying the Word

A. Do we identify with the prodigal son?

1. Have I behaved foolishly?
2. Am I controlled by impulses that lead me to ruin?
3. Do I believe God will only take me as a slave rather than a son?
4. Look to God - He will take as a son
5. Look to God - He will deliver us from foolishness
6. Look to God - He will deliver us - from us!

B. Do we identify with the older brother?

1. Do I view myself as better than wandering brothers?

2. Do I view God as a slave owner - rather than as Father?
3. Do I reject those God has accepted in grace?
4. This is a major point of the parable
5. This is a major temptation for religious folks in all ages
6. If it is true of me - repent and ask God for grace to change

C. Do we identify with the father?

1. He is certainly pointing to God in the parable
2. But am I like him - do I lavish grace - prodigally?
3. Do I lavish forgiveness - prodigally?
4. Let's be like the father - running to restore!
5. Let's be like the Father - prodigal in grace!

The Prodigal

Luke 15:11-32
January 13, 2013
Prayer
Numbers 6:24-26