

The Return of The Prodigal

Luke 15:11-32

Introduction:

- A. This Parable is the third in a series to counter self-righteousness of the Pharisees.
 - 1. The Pharisees' complaint (v. 1,2)
 - 2. The Lord's response: The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.
 - 3. The Lord's focus in this parable: the attitude on the older brother.
- B. Our focus in this lesson is on the return of the Prodigal son, but first notice:

Discussion:

I. The Departure of the Prodigal.

- A. No reason given for the prodigal's leaving home (vv. 12-13).
- B. Some possible reasons for leaving.
 - 1. Could have lost faith in his father (cf. Heb. 3:12).
 - 2. Could have become tired of way of life (Cf. Gal. 6:9).
 - 3. Could have been attracted to world (cf. 2 Tim. 4:10).
 - 4. Could have wanted his "freedom" (cf. 2 Pet. 2:19).
 - 5. Could have gotten his feelings hurt by a family member.
- C. By leaving, he left behind all the benefits and fellowship of home.

II. The Return of the Prodigal.

- A. He returned *willingly* (vv. 17, 18).
 - 1. The father was more than willing for him to come home (v. 20; cf. Rev. 3:20)
 - 2. The son had to come to himself and decide to return.
 - 3. We can and should rebuke, encourage and even beg — but prodigals must decide to do right.
- B. He returned *humbly* (vv. 18-21 cf. Psalms 34:18).
 - 1. He was in no position to *demand* anything.
 - 2. He did not try to boldly re-enter the family circle without apology.
 - 3. He humbly and freely confessed his sin — "I have sinned..."
 - a. Reformation is not repentance — not merely quit wickedness, but repent (Acts 8:22)
 - b. Returning is not confession — not merely quit sinning, but confess (1 John 2:1; James 5:16)
 - c. Not, "I have sinned, but ..."
- C. He returned *unconditionally*.
 - 1. He did not try to negotiate his way back in — in no position to negotiate.
 - 2. He did not attach any "if's" to his offer to return.
 - a. Not if father would do thus and so.
 - b. Not if family (including older brother) will do thus and so.

Conclusion:

- A. All prodigals must willingly, humbly and unconditionally return to the Lord.
- B. All "elder brothers" must do their duty toward prodigals — but, if not, prodigal still must do his.