

Sermon Study Guide

10.18.2009 – Prodigal



PRODIGAL

WEEK OF OCTOBER 18, 2009

Discussion: Together as a Group

1. What story from your past comes to mind when you think of the word forgiveness?

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

¹¹Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'^[a]

²²"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹" 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

2. A parable is an earthly story with a spiritual meaning. As you read the parable, what do you notice concerning the older son's heart attitude? How would you describe him?

3. The older brother felt justified in his attitude toward his younger brother. How have you found yourself feeling the same way?

Have three people read these Scriptures and discuss what they have to say about this attitude? Hebrews 12:15, Ephesians 4:31, Matthew 7:1-2

4. As you read the parable of Jesus, what struck you about the younger son?

5. The younger brother went through a transformation in his thinking. How do these Scriptures show transformation in a person's life?

Have three people in the group read them. Psalms 51:17, Psalms 34:18, Proverbs 28:13

6. The father's forgiving heart is revealed in his acceptance of the younger son in spite of what he had done. Have you ever been in a similar situation?

7. Struggling to forgive a person is a common experience to us humans? Why is it so difficult for us to do this?

8. Do you have relationships in your life that need to experience your forgiveness?

After sharing, spend some time praying for one another.