



Part 4 –A Tale of 2 Sons

Luke 15:11-19

May 30, 2010

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut, then we will talk about it."

A month later the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said, "Son, I'm real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your Bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that. I've read in the Bible that Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

His father replied, "Yes, son, and if you read on further you'll find out that they walked everywhere they went!"

Transition: If only our conflicts with our kids were that simple. We see a story about a Dad and 2 sons that is a lot more intense!

We all know the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But the story is really about 2 sons. If you were the father, how would you have responded to the rebellious son? What about the self righteous older son? What did the father do right? His example gives us a glimpse of how our Heavenly Father wants to treat us when we wander far from home (younger rebellious son) as well as for those who smugly sit in judgment (older religious son). This week we will look at the younger son!

Background:

This parable is found only in Luke and is the longest of his parables. Charles Dickens said the parable of the prodigal son was the greatest short story ever written! From Hank Williams' song to Rembrandt's painting, it is a story for the ages. The Pharisees and scribes have been bad mouthing Him because of His practice of associating with "sinners". In light of the Pharisees' accusations, He illustrates what unconditional love is all about. Jesus illustrates this love using the 3 great parables found in Luke 15: The Lost Coin, Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son. The Prodigal Son is the last of these parables.

Context: Remember to whom he is speaking: v. 1-2

***Tax gathers and sinners:** representing the younger brother. They were immoral but receptive and eager to hear.

***Pharisees and scribes:** representing the older brother. They were highly religious and moral but rejecting and even hostile!

I. A rude rejection (v. 11-19)... A Son's Rebellion

A. His problem: **Restlessness** fostered by selfishness. (v. 11-12)

1. **The son was impatient.** Normally the estate was divided as follows: Elder son was to receive 2/3 and younger son 1/3 in the will – this was usually done at retirement or death. The request was unusual, because son wanted his share now, immediately. He presumed on his father's kindness. The father was doing him a favor, he didn't have to. Son was entitled by law to his share, though he had no right to claim it during his father's lifetime. The father divided the estate, thus the elder son received his share, though he did not request it.
2. **The son was impulsive.** He hadn't learned to wait! We have produced an impulsive generation of "want it

now kids!” They want instant gratification, whether it is sex, fun, money, etc.

3. [App](#): How often do we presume on God? Asking for things we don't deserve! He blessed him instead of begging him to stop. The father was gracious. God is gracious with us.

B. Why did the younger son leave?

*1 out of 7 children will run away before the age of 18. (National runaway switchboard website; June 2005). Why do kids leave home? *[Many of you are running from God today!](#)

1. **Family**: Competition with older brother; fighting with his brother; sibling rivalry. His brother was “sooooo” good!
2. **Friends**: peer pressure. That is a modern invention. No upstanding Jewish boy would abandon his family heritage out of peer pressure!
3. **Failure**: poor self-image? Wanted to prove to dad that he could succeed.
4. **Frustration**: Misunderstood? Angry about something?
5. **Fun**: Wanted to travel? Party? Experimentation? Curiosity?
6. **Freedom**:
 - to get out on his own; assertion of independence.
 - Maybe dad was overly strict; didn't like the discipline of his father; free of parental restraint. Rejection of family values;
 - Because of selfishness he rejects his family and sets off on his adventure! Ultimately he is saying to his father that he didn't want his accountability or his authority. All he wanted was his money and freedom. [Application: he represents all of us who](#)

willfully reject the love of the Heavenly Father in pursuit of our own agenda.

Summary: This was a horrible breach of decorum. The younger son didn't want just the money, he wanted his freedom. In the process he ...

1. *Disregards* his inheritance. It was unheard of.
2. *Dishonors* his father. By asking for his money now he is saying, "I wish you were dead!" He is either oblivious to his shame or totally unconcerned about it.
3. *Demands* his birthright: *Portion of goods*. Not the word for inheritance but actually personal valuables and liquid assets. He asks for stuff he can sell quickly and use for cash!
4. *Divides* his father's estate or "livelihood": Greek word *bios*. Literally: his life. Everything the family had accumulated for generations... no strings attached.
5. *Dismisses* the obvious love the father had for him. It was the ultimate disgrace and humiliation the father endured because of his son's rejection.

C. His pursuits: **Recklessness** fueled by sensuality (v. 13-16)

1. Scene # 1 – The Party (v. 13)
 - "*Gathered everything together*" – "I've got to get out of here!" The grass always looks greener somewhere else! He left nothing that would bring him back to family ties and home. He turns his stuff into cash probably losing hundreds of dollars in the exchange. Ex: **gold necklaces for cash**.
 - "*Not many days later*" – evidently this had been planned for quite some time because it took very little time for him to pack up and leave. Why didn't older brother step up and speak sense into his kid brother? I will tell you why! The older brother didn't love his dad either. I will explain why next

week. He was basking in his own self-righteous, good boy legalism.

- Key: Remember the money was given, not earned. Parents don't spoil your kids with excessive allowances. EX: New cars on their 16th birthday.
- *Distant country*: A Gentile country which no respecting Jew would go to... because that would make them unclean!
- *"Squandered estate with loose living"*:

Lit – *"reckless; wild; wasted; loose living"*; it goes beyond waste to include moral failure and sexual self-indulgence. Has the idea of throwing money to the wind, like grain being separated from the chaff.

This is the ultimate description for life apart from God. Life became one big party. He spent all his resources; his entire wad of cash.

- Money was like magic bubbles; we grasp for things we can't have. He was used by his supposed friends and then discarded. Principle: Sin never delivers what it promises. The easy road of pleasure turns into the hard road of pain.

2. Scene # 2 – The Pits (v. 14-16)

- Two Disasters: He had blown his money frivolously and a famine hit the country. *"He ran out of money and ran into a famine!"* He must have been really second guessing himself, knowing that he wouldn't have been in such a bind if he wouldn't have lived like a playboy. As long as he had money he was popular. His supposed friends just used him!
- *Famine*: Famine were often seen as signs of God's retribution and chastisement to those who disobeyed Him. Example: Gen.12: that famine brought Abraham to Egypt. Because food was scarce, it was

high priced. Being a foreigner, it gave the people of that country a perfect excuse for not sharing and helping the boy. Can you imagine the sense of desperation as he went from job to job? A sense of panic begins to set in as his stomach aches from having not eaten in several days! It was the final blow in a series of compounded failures! Now it was payback time!

- This is a classic illustration of an undisciplined, self-indulgent naïve party boy who was popular when he had money but was now destitute and far from home. The glitter and gold of adventure had proven to be “fool’s gold”... in every way.
- *“Attached: (Lit. joined, glued; cemented; cleave) himself to one of the citizens...”* (v. 15). The boy forced himself on this employer. The guy didn’t want to hire him but finally gave in when the “kid” wouldn’t leave him alone. He became a beggar and wouldn’t take “no” for an answer! [Like the orphan kids in Cuzco as I headed to Machu Pichu.](#)
- **Cross reference:** [Like the widow in Luke 18:1-8 who attached herself to the unjust judge. He gives in because of her persistence.](#)
- [His plan is like what many do when they are avoiding dealing with the consequences of their choices. He tries to solve it on his own instead of facing the reality of his sin.](#)
- **His employment:** Feeding the pigs was the ultimate indignity. It was absolutely degrading; lowest form of work a Jew could be involved in. No proper Jewish boy would stoop that low! He was an absolute disgrace to himself and his family. Ownership of pigs in fact was forbidden by Jewish law (Lev.11:7). What do you think he was thinking? [This was like Bill Gates’ son living in the](#)

Tijuana dump and scavenging for food. The job offer was really more of insult, than an act of compassion. It also kept him out in the wilderness away from the family compound.

- “*Longed to fill (satisfy) his stomach*: No one gave him anything. He may have had to steal to stay alive. He must have not only been hungry, but guilt-ridden.
- His self-image? Pigs were more valuable than he was. He ate the pig’s food! Imagine his despair as he groveled for scraps of food in the pig trough. How did I end up here?

II. Conclusion: A story of redemption.

A. Gabe’s testimony:

B. Prayer of invitation