



Part 6 –A Tale of 2 Sons...
What the Father Did Right!

Luke 15:11-32

June 13, 2010

Over the last 2 weeks we looked at the story of 2 brothers who were both far from God. The younger one was rebellious but ultimately was reconciled, while the older was self righteous and alienated from the Father. The Father's reactions to both can give us a glimpse at our Heavenly Father's response to us when we are far from Him.

I. A Father's Response...What the Father did Right!

A. He let his son **go**... (v. 12-13)

1. God is waiting for you. No matter what your condition. **Just because He loves you, doesn't mean He will chase after you.** He didn't come after him.
2. He may have been tempted to send a servant to keep an eye on him! He even had the "money" to keep an eye on him! Father never chased after him. **Parents sometimes you need to let go!**
3. The party will end sometime. Be patient. (v.13)
4. **Learn** to let go of your kids.

B. He didn't "**rescue**" him (v.14-17)

1. Even when he fell on hard times (v. 14)
2. He let him suffer the natural consequences of his decision (v. 16)
3. He allowed him to "figure out" his life" (v.17) "he came to his senses"). **Have you come to your senses yet?**
4. The Father lovingly accepted him back but the consequences of his decision remained. Brother still owned everything. No mention of a new deal.

C. He greeted him with **gladness** not a guilt trip (v.20)

1. 5 things the father didn't do ...

- **No manipulation:** You cost me a bundle. You owe me now. Time to pay up!
- **No lecture:** What went wrong? I told you so! Why didn't you listen to me in the first place? Didn't scold him for being so stupid!
- **No punishment:** He could have had him stoned under Mosaic Law, because of his rebellion.
- **No prying or nagging:** You did what? What did you spend your money on? Didn't pry into his past
- **No guilt trip:** I hope you've learned your lesson. Your mother and I were worried sick about you! You've disgraced our family name. What will people say?

2. Who do you run to?

- **Ran:** no respectable, wealthy, honorable man would have run. Arabic translations until 1860 translated it presented or hurried. **Thought: God runs to us when we come to Him!**
- The Father was going to get to him first, so as to deflect the scorn from the townspeople who would have gotten to him first. **Heb. 12:2 Christ endured the shame on the cross.**

D. There was a **celebration** not condemnation (v. 22-23)

1. There was a party instead of a punishment. Remember the word prodigal means extravagant. ..excessively lavish.
2. Son doesn't finish apology because father is smothering him with love. **He countered his son's confession with kindness and restoration.**

3. **Insight:** The son was never going to be able to provide full restitution and neither can we. He had to ultimately trust the father's mercy and so do we!
4. If the Father hadn't forgiven him, no in that culture would have dared to take him in. He was at the end of the line. It was forgiveness or death!
5. *Fatted Calf:* 500 pound veal calf would have fed about 200 people. He was feeding the whole village. He is putting the whole town on notice that his son his son I not only back, but forgiven. The feast was for the Father's sake. It wasn't about the son's goodness but the Father's graciousness.
6. *John 6:37: The one who comes to me, I in no way will cast out.*

E. He didn't succumb to negativity. (v. 24)

1. It would have been easy for him to dwell on the past failures, instead of the future hope. He chooses joy and forgiveness over judging and finger pointing.
2. **Parents: Do you have a hard time letting go of the past?**
3. Share love unconditionally. The words "I Love You" can cover an awful lot of anger, bitterness and hurt.
4. Merry: Imagine the almost delirious excitement upon the return of the son.
5. **Illustration: John's call to us on Memorial weekend 2009.**

F. He **reassured** the older son of his love and blessing (v. 31)

1. *"Everything I have is yours"*
2. The law of "usufruct": Confers all the rights of ownership without actually transferring the title of ownership per se. All questions about the long term ownership of the family assets were already settled, legally binding and absolutely irrevocable.

3. Everything belonged the older brother. No loopholes!
4. We have the blessing of sonship. God will never renege on His promises to us! **What are some of the blessings we have as God's sons?**

G. He kept everything in **perspective** (v. 32)

1. He had an eternal perspective; Lost/Found; Dead and alive.
2. He didn't respond in anger towards either son! He entreated his older son to join the party (v. 28)
3. We have to take a long term perspective about our kids. In spite of heartache, continue to hold the lantern of love out so your kids can find their way back!

II. Lessons about repentance and forgiveness

A. There is a difference between **regret** and repentance.

1. Is whether you follow through with restitution?
2. Do you follow through on what you said you would do?
3. Do your turn from sin and foolishness?
4. Judas had regret...Peter had repentance.

B. **Blaming** God for things comes from a faulty world view.

1. The son had only himself to blame. He was willing to take responsibility for his actions and ultimately acknowledges his failure. He was the one who had created such distance between himself and his father.
2. **What do we blame God for? What do we need to own?**

C. None of us **deserve** God's forgiveness.

1. The Pharisee's (and the older son!) biggest error is was in the mistaken belief that they did deserve God's/Father's favor.
2. Don't let self righteous attitudes rob you of joy!

- D. God is not a **reluctant** Savior.
 - 1. He eagerly forgives. *Luke 15:7*
 - 2. He lavishly bestows
- E. God **misses** you when you are far from Him
 - 1. Just like the Father missed the prodigal!
 - 2. Parental Math...

Nearly a week ago Peg and I had a very hard week.

Wednesday night: Mike slept downstairs in his room where children belong and we slept upstairs in ours where moms and dads belong.

Thursday night – we were 350 miles away and he was in Ramada 325 and we were in 323 in connecting rooms and we left the door open and talked and laughed together.

Friday night – 700 miles from home and he was in 247 and we were in 239 and somehow we seemed together.

Saturday night – he was in the freshman dorm and we were still in 239.

Sunday night – we were home and he was 700 miles away in Chapman 309.

Now we have been through this before Robert had gone away to college and we had gathered ourselves together until we had gotten over it – mainly because he is married now and he only lives ten miles away and comes to visit often. So we thought we know how to handle separation pretty well but we came away so lonely and blue.

Oh, our hearts are filled with pride at a fine young man and our minds are filled with memories from tricycles to commencements but deep down inside somewhere we just ached with loneliness and pain.

Somebody said you still have three at home. Three fine kids and there is still plenty of noise – plenty of ballgames to go to – plenty of responsibilities – plenty of laughter – plenty of everything *except Mike*. And in parental math five minus one just doesn't equal plenty.

And I was thinking about God. He sure has plenty of children – plenty of artists – plenty of singers – and plenty of candlestick makers – and preachers – plenty of everybody *except you*. And all of them together can never take your place. And there will always be an empty spot in his heart – and a vacant chair at his table when you're not home. And if once in awhile it seems as if he's crowding you a bit – try to forgive him. It may be one of those nights when he misses you so much he can hardly stand it.

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