The Bitter Brother

Terry Francis · Luke 15:25–32

INTRODUCTION

- We want to talk about forgiveness when it's the forgiveness we're receiving. Sometimes we don't want to talk about forgiveness when it's the forgiveness we're giving.
- We've all sinned, and we're only going to be able to go to heaven for eternity by the grace of God.
- Jesus told this story to show the Pharisees who they were, and they're the older brother in this story.

1 God Treats Us Fairly

Luke 15:31

- We need to learn God treats us fairly.
- All that is mine is yours. Everything here is yours.
- We struggle with balancing mercy and justice in our lives.
- God doesn't struggle with that. God knows how to handle all that. He's perfect.
- He was going to get what rightfully came to him. It was fair, it was just. God is a just God.

2 With Privilege Brings Responsibility

Luke 15:29; Matthew 6:3–4

- There seems to be this sense of entitlement from this brother.
- The older brother, he got more responsibility because he was the older brother.
- We don't deserve a reward for doing what is our duty.
- As God's children, as the redeemed, there's a responsibility to teach the lost, and we ought to just do that without expecting any recognition for it.
- When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand's doing.

3 Have an Attitude of Service

Luke 15:29; Luke 15:18–19

- We also need to learn to have an attitude of service.
- Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as a hired servant.
- We need to humble ourselves and understand that we are not God's slave. We are his children. But we are children who serve.
- Part of overcoming sin is finding humility.

4 How Important It Is to Forgive

Matthew 6:14–15; Matthew 18:21–22; Colossians 3:12–13

- If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.
- Over and over and over again, the scriptures say you have to forgive one another.
- Who am I to withhold forgiveness from anybody?
- Don't make somebody be a spiritual leper for the rest of their life.

5 See the Brother's Return as a Celebration

Luke 15:32

- We need to see the brother's return as a celebration.
- We just don't look at people returning sometimes the way God does.
- It is fitting to celebrate. Your brother was dead. He's alive. He was lost and he's found.
- Oh, that I could see the world and those lost in sin the way God sees them. And celebrate their return.

THE CHALLENGE

I want you to think about you, not about other people.

MY NOTES