The Forgiving Father

Terry Francis · Luke 15:11–32

INTRODUCTION

- We often call this the story of the prodigal son, and the reality is that's really not a good name.
- Maybe what we ought to call this is the parable of the forgiving father. Because one of the great values of this story is what you and I learn about God from this story.
- I don't know that there's a better picture of God's love and mercy, of his grace, of his acceptance of us despite our filthy deeds, anywhere in Scripture than Luke 15, verses 11 through 32.

1 The Story From the Father's Perspective

Deuteronomy 21:17; Luke 15:20; Luke 15:1–2

- What Luke 15 shows us is instead of taking us out, God has decided to wait on us to come home.
- While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.
- The Father is so consumed with love and compassion and pure joy at the return of his son. The son doesn't even finish his confession.
- This is an illustration by Christ to explain the grace and mercy and forgiveness of God.

2 God Is Love

- We have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- God loves us all, no matter what we have done. I don't care what it is. God still loves you. And he still wants you to come home.
- We have all been the reckless son, and we have all been unworthy to be called his child.
- Because of his love for you, he gives you grace and mercy. Not that you ever deserve it. Not that you can earn it.

3 He Wants Us to Come Home

Luke 15:20

- That father, I am convinced, sat there many a day waiting and wanting that child to return.
- God is looking for you. You have his undivided attention. When you're separated from God, he thinks of you.
- He is anxiously waiting for you to turn your heart back to him. And every day, God waits for you to come to your senses and come home.

4 He Accepts Us When We Do

Luke 15:21

- He didn't care about where he had been. He didn't care about what he had done. He was just glad he came home.
- He is changed, he has returned, he has come home. And we've got to understand that when people do that, God welcomes them home.
- We need to learn to forgive like God does. Now that's not easy.
- The way I forgive other people is the way I'm going to be forgiven.

5 God Is a Just God

Luke 15:29–32

- Son, you are always with me. And all that is mine is yours.
- The younger brother was welcomed home and was celebrated, but he's not given another inheritance.
- I am not always just and fair, but God is just and fair. And we can rest in that fact.
- God's going to take care of everything. Trust God to take care of all of that. That's not my job.

6 God Really Rejoices Over Those Who Return

Luke 15:7; Luke 15:10; Luke 15:32

- There's more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who have no need of repentance.
- Nothing causes the creator to rejoice more than when his rebellious children come home.
- We have to imitate the celebration over the return of the sinner.
- Nothing should cause Christians to cry tears of joy more than when they see somebody get their life right with God.

THE CHALLENGE

Why not return? Why not, if you're a child of God who's fallen away, why not confess that sin to God and he'll forgive you?

MY NOTES