

Are We Honoring Jesus as Lord – Part 8: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 ESV

UNREPENTANCE – *Sometimes It Shows and Sometimes It Is Hidden!*

Services: Sunday, March 6 at 8:00 or 10:45

Church Year: Fourth Sunday in Lent – 2016

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Last Sunday included *the parable of the fruitless fig tree*; today's parable is known by many as *the parable of the prodigal son*. Initially that son was unrepentant – **life was all about him**; but when his money was gone and he was starving, God worked a change of heart, **which led to changes of attitude and action!** Let us listen, think, and learn; *then be repentant!*

1. **The Setting:** ¹ **Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.** ² **And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”** ³ **So he told them this parable...¹¹ ... “There was a man who had two sons. //**
 - ◆ The first parable in Luke 15 is about the lost sheep,
 - ◆ the second one is about the lost coin, and
 - ◆ the third one is about the prodigal son. As Jesus spoke, two groups of people were listening: (1) the sinners—*represented by the younger son*; and (2) the Pharisees—*represented by the older son*. Even though the younger son was **obviously wrong** and the older son **looked right**, both were in need of repentance! So, for the younger son, **his unrepentance showed**, but, for the older son, **his unrepentance was hidden!**

2. **Open Unrepentance:** ¹² “And the younger of [the two sons] said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them [*1/3 to the younger son, 2/3’s to the older son*]. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.” // The younger son had this attitude: I don’t care what anybody thinks, not even God; I’m going to eat, drink, and be merry! Decades ago in America, there was shame, so people sinned *behind closed doors*. But now, as it says in Zephaniah 3:5, “[the unjust knows no shame](#)” (Zep 3:5 ESV). Furthermore, *they want us to approve of their shameful ways!*

3. **Broke and Hungry:** ¹⁴ “And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.” // When all resources are gone, people will either **✦**curse God or **✦**become more open to receiving His help.

4. **Planned Confession:** ¹⁷ “But when he came to himself [*when he began to think again*], he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven [*since all sins are against God (Ps. 51:4)*] and before you [*since I demanded my inheritance before you died; then threw it away with evil living*]. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy

to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.” // So, by God’s grace, he thought it through; then he planned how he would express his sincere sorrow to his father and ask for his mercy.

5. **The Father’s Love and Forgiveness:** ²⁰ “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. [*Why? His father had been longing for his son to return – even as God the Father longs for all unrepentant sinners to return to Him!*] ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father [filled with joy] said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate. // The LORD said to Jeremiah, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34 ESV). That is what the father did toward his younger son! God the Father wants to do the same *for every wrongdoer!*

6. **Hidden Unrepentance:** ²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and

entreated him,²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’” // What was the older son thinking?

THIS ISN'T FAIR; my little brother **sinned** while I **served**, yet *he gets the fattened calf and I get nothing!* Let's think about the two sons:

- a. The younger son thought about himself, so *he took his money and spent it on himself*. Just like people today *who live in open sin!*
- b. The older son stayed and served, yet *he did so for himself, not out of love for his father*. Just like people today *who go through the **right motions** for the **wrong reasons!***

7. **The Father's Love Is Greater than Our Sin:**³¹ “**And [the father] said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’**³² **It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’**” // There is no jealousy in the kingdom of God; *there are plenty of blessings for everyone!*

Conclusion: Let us pray: Dear Holy Spirit, You have made us new in Christ, *so we are forever blessed through Jesus*; therefore, help us to be *sincerely repentant* and *sincerely rejoice* over **all** who repent! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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