

Rejoice With Me - II

Introduction and Review

- ❑ In response to His critics, Jesus tells three parables to reveal the heart of God toward any sinner that repents (v. 1-32).
- ❑ In the first parable, the shepherd has great joy in finding one lost sheep even with 99 others presumably safe (v. 4-6).
- ❑ In the second parable, the homemaker has great joy in finding one lost coin even with 9 other coins in a safe place (v. 8-9).
- ❑ Both parables teach that God & the angels have great joy over one genuine convert who becomes a disciple (v. 7 & 10). Religious pretenders bring no joy or pleasure to God (v. 7).
- ❑ Today we'll look at the third parable – the prodigal son.

I. The Prodigal Son Leaves (v. 11-16)

A. The request of rebellion (v. 11-12)

*Inheritance was a gift from a father to his children after his death (De. 21:17). The younger son's request means that he wants to sever the relationship with his father as if he were dead – **freedom** from parental control [rebellion]. The father graciously granted the request knowing all the implications for himself & consequences for his son.*

B. The life of rebellion (v. 13-14)

The younger son takes the inheritance & leaves home to live a life free of his father's influence. He treats the inheritance as insignificant, converts it to cash & squanders it all in a sinful lifestyle (v. 30; sin cannot satisfy - Eccl. 1:8; 2:10-11).

C. The consequences of rebellion (v. 15-16)

Desperate for food & income, he takes the lowest possible job for a Jew. He was working for a Gentile on a pig farm but cannot provide his needs. He is in absolute desperation & isolation – no food & no one to help (v. 16).

II. The Prodigal Son Returns (v. 17-21)

A. The work of repentance (v. 17a)

“But when he came to himself” means he had a change in his thinking & purpose of life = repentance. Repentance is a work of God in the heart (2Co. 7:10; 2Tim. 2:25).

B. The thoughts of repentance (v. 17b-19)

Genuine repentance brings radical, positive changes to a person's reasoning & thinking. He rightly remembers his father's provisions (v. 17b), he's ready to confess his sin (v. 18) & accept the consequences of his sin (v. 19).

C. The actions of repentance (v. 20a, 21)

*Genuine repentance always has godly fruit or actions (v. 20a; Mt. 3:8). His confession is consistent with the original conviction from God (v. 18-19, 21) – **no excuses....***

III. Response to the Prodigal Son's Return (v. 22-32)

A. The father & his servants (v. 20b, 22-24)

*The father felt compassion & expressed acceptance before the confession (v. 20b). Compassion means he felt pity or sympathy for his son in spite of his own personal loss & hurt. The father knows that the son's return demonstrates change even before his confession. After confession, there's no need for more details and/or consequences of his sin – **RESTORATION & REJOICING** (v. 22-24).*

B. The older brother (v. 25-32)

*The older brother stayed home, worked hard & obeyed his father's law (self-righteous & legalistic). His first response was anger & refusal to celebrate (v. 28a). Then he accused his father of injustice with the restoration & celebration for his brother (v. 29-30) = **ANGER, SADNESS & ACCUSATION**. The father graciously corrects the son's wrong thinking & gives him opportunity to repent (v. 31-32).*

APPL: The younger son = the blatant & known sinners; the older son = religious sinners. Both sons are unbelievers. The younger son is brought to repentance & faith; the older son is left with an invitation. The younger son's response is cause for great joy & rejoicing; the older son's response is cause for concern, sadness & prayer. Sinners are dead & lost; believers are alive & found (v. 24, 32). The father has been hurt & misunderstood by both sons; has been gracious & patient with both sons; has offered forgiveness to both & is ready to rejoice with either one that repents!

CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brothers & sisters let's consider some truths from this parable. God will allow ungrateful & evil people to carry out evil plans. God will allow evil people to live ungodly lives of luxury & pleasure. God will allow people to be brought down to living in extreme desperation & isolation. But God will also grant these same ungrateful & evil people repentance & faith leading to salvation; bringing the same people into the family of God & making them His children. If we have been hurt or suffered loss from sinners, God expects us to forgive them, accept them & rejoice with them when they repent & believe. Regardless of the degree of harm sinners may have caused us (Corrie ten Boom), God expects us to forgive & rejoice with any & every sinner that repents and comes to Jesus for salvation in faith. God expects us to receive them as a brother or sister in the Lord without hesitation or reservation. Whole-hearted restoration & rejoicing can only occur with whole-hearted forgiveness & love. Are you free today to forgive & love anyone, even your enemies? Are you free to love your enemies & pray for those who persecute you? If so Jesus said that this is truly characteristic of God's children & you are truly free to rejoice!!!!

If you are not a Christian, you can be forgiven, restored & experience the real joy of the Lord today. But you must believe...

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