

Prodigal Son

△ Luke 15:17-24

Intro

Today we have a communion and prayer ministry service

And I would like to focus today on the unconditional love of God

Many people, Many Christians cannot get their head around that Jesus really loves them

Even though most of our Songs speak about the Love of Christ for us all

But we think it is for humanity

And do not realise that his love is just also for me

Jesus tried to speak about that when he was alive

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his only, so that everyone who believes in him, may have eternal life

Another way Jesus spoke about his love is by parables

One of the more famous ones is the parable of the Prodigal (or the

Lost) Son

Intro to reading

The story starts with the famous "once upon a time" or "There was a man who had two sons

And we see the younger son being dissatisfied with his life

He wants to leave home and set out on his own. He wants to leave his family and the security

Let's go on an adventure!

But how do I pay for it?

Cunning Plan

Dad, can you give me already my share of my inheritance, please

And the dad, unlike normal dads, does that too

The story is unclear about how this happened

Did he have to sell real estate or perhaps it was only the Dad's savings

But we see that the son gets his fair share

Travelling away

It only takes a few days and the son emigrates, to a far country

If he lived in the UK he might have travelled to Thailand

And once there we hear that he lived a life

And once there we hear that he lived a life of utmost luxury, without considering how much money he had

He squandered it

Poor

And he became poor and had to work!

In addition there's a famine so food was not easy to buy or get

And we see he gets hungry

Working

Not having developed any qualifications and as a stranger

He only good work as a farm worker to feed the pigs

Note: pigs are unclean animals in Jesus' time

So a double humiliation

But he was not allowed to eat the food himself that give to the pigs

I.e. the pigs had a better life than he!

Reading

The rest of the story

Probably just as unlikely as the beginning?

The son comes to his senses

If I work at my dad's, i'll be better off

And he returns home

The Dad is waiting for him - and sees him far off

The son tries to make amends and

THE SON TRIES TO MAKE AMENUS AND
confess

I am not your son anymore dad, but
can I work for you?

But the Dad does not seem to
listen

He forgives him - not in words, but by
his actions

A ring, a robe, sandals, and a feast

There's nor recriminations, no explanations

Dead but now alive again; lost and
now found

That is all that matters

That he returned and that he is alive in
his Dad's live and in his arms again

The elder son

The story carries on with the elder
Son, and his reaction

But I want to stop here

And look at the implications of this
story for us

A Parable

This is a parable

A picturesque figure of language in
which an analogy refers to a similar but
different reality

Jesus used parables to instruct the

people.

A story is easier to internalise and remember, than a cold definition

A story inhabits emotion

But Jesus' parables almost always explain something about God, about himself or an aspect of the Kingdom of God

And here it is easy to imagine that the Son is a human person and that the Father is God

The Parable tells our story

The story of every human being

God is our Father

We all have wanted to get away from him

We felt life under the Father's way of living hard

Too many rules

morality

No we want to be free

And we walked away

Travelled as far away from God as we could

Knowing that what we are doing is not right

But enjoying our life

Until it comes to crisis

And we find there is something missing that we need

The Son began to be in need

We assume that it is food and shelter

But maybe it is something more allusive

Like fulfilment, purpose, happiness, love,

Shalom

The peace that passes understanding

that comes from being in a relationship with
God

So we are searching, and
humanity is searching and every
human being is searching

Some call this progress

But no one knows what we progress to

What is the end state that we are
searching for?

Foolish or wise?

The son was wise not foolish

We think that the son is foolish, to
leave his Father

But he was wise, when he came into
need, he know he had to return to his
Father

Humanity is foolish

They carry on searching for things

But they discount the one that can
bring them fulfilment of their need

God in the form of Jesus Christ

So what about us?

Most of you would say you are

Christians

And you are, because you have said
that you believe in Jesus Christ

But a lot of Christians stop there

The return to the Father

As helping hands

But the Father is standing there,
with the ring, the robe, the shoes
and the food

You can be my child again!

Be we so, we rather work for our living,
than you very much

We like it here in your neighbourhood

Because it is good here

But we do not really want you to
become our Father

To be emotionally involved with God

And so we are still searching, still
not happy, although it is better to
live in the shadow of God

Coming to church

Meeting with the people

But not really want to meet with the one
who loves us so much

Come to him

That is what today's prayer

ministry is about

Come to him, accept him as your
Father

No, I am not good enough

I have sinned, I have done wrong

Some of the things I have done I
cannot even forgive myself

I cannot imagine God forgiving me!

So I rather keep my distance

The son was forgiven fully

He tried to go halfway - I am not
good enough to be your son

But the Father took him in his arms

And reinstated him as Son - no
questions asked

You are forgiven fully

That is the same for us

Jesus died on the cross for us

To show the depth of despair and
depravity he is willing to go to

So that we are willing to accept
his forgiveness - because it is real

So come, test the Lord, and
see if he really wants to forgive

Now is the time

The time of communion

remembering that Jesus died for us

The time where we offer prayer
ministry

As safe space for you to ask for
forgiveness

You do not need to spell it out

The team does not need to know

And God knows already

Just ask him the question: Do you
really forgive me, Lord?

Are you willing to try?