

Living with the Assurance that God Enjoys Us (Lk. 15)

I. JESUS REVEALED THE FATHER (LK. 15)

- A. In Luke 15, Jesus gave three parables that have profound implications for our lives today. This chapter gives us one of the most significant revelations of God in the Scripture. It is more than a children's story—it is a life-changing revelation of God that greatly changes all who receive it.
- B. In these parables, Jesus revealed God's personality and how He pursues us, enjoys us, shows mercy, and feels affection over us as our heavenly Father. The truth that Jesus most emphasized here is that God rejoices as He forgives and restores us (Lk. 15: 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 23, 32).
- C. The truth of God's fatherhood was a dramatic new teaching to Israel who rightly viewed God as transcendent creator. They were focused on God's great power and holiness. Jesus taught them that God was their Father to whom they were to draw near with assurance that He enjoyed them.
¹⁹*Therefore...having boldness to enter the Holiest [God's presence] by the blood of Jesus...*
²²*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... (Heb. 10:19-22)*
- D. Our greatest emotional need is to have *the assurance that we are enjoyed by God* even in our weakness. Every person was created with a longing to be delighted in and enjoyed by God. A prevailing stronghold in many today is related to the fear of rejection and the trauma of shame. This stronghold hinders our ability to enjoy God, His Word, and the work of the kingdom.
- E. The way we view God's emotions toward us in our weakness affects how we approach God. It determines if we run to God or from God when we see our weakness. The view of many is that *God is mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us*. One of the most important questions in our spiritual journey is: how does God feel when He looks at me? He delights in relating to us.
⁴*...You shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...⁵as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isa. 62:5)*
- F. Paul's dramatic declaration that we have become a new creation in Christ, with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The "he" that is a new creation is our born-again spirit.
¹⁷*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...²¹that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)*
¹²*"For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (Heb. 8:12)*
¹*There is...now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... (Rom. 8:1)*
¹⁰*...for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Rev. 12:10)*

II. THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON (LK. 15:11-32): THE PRODIGAL SON

A. The parable of how the Father responds to a son who rebels against Him.

¹¹He said: “A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me’...¹³The younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴But when he had spent all...¹⁵Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.” (Lk. 15:11-16)

B. ***Give me the portion***: He wanted his father to hurry up and die so he could get his inheritance. He wanted his father’s power, wealth, and influence, without having relationship with his father.

C. The son repented (as expressed in v. 18, 21), but had a wrong view of himself before his father.

¹⁷When he came to himself [repentance], he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” (Lk. 15:17-19)

1. ***I have sinned and am not worthy***: The son genuinely repented and knew that there was nothing that he could do to be worthy of forgiveness or to earn his father’s love.

2. ***Hired hand***: The response of one without grace is to approach God on the basis of their works and worthiness. A hired servant is one who works for all that he receives.

D. Jesus described how His Father responds when His people repent. This parable is not first about a son who lost his inheritance, but about a father who lost his son. Next, it is about how he responds to his son to restore him. Then it is about how he wants His people to respond.

²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. (Lk. 15:20)

1. ***Saw***: The father watched earnestly for the return of his son.

2. ***Compassion***: The father had tender feeling instead of anger towards the prodigal son.

3. ***Ran***: The father had enthusiasm, as fathers in the ancient world did not run like this.

4. ***Fell on his neck***: The father embraced him instead of being disgusted and angry.

5. ***Kissed***: The father’s kiss signified the restoration of favor without a season of probation.

- E. We can have a new beginning with God as a first-class citizen after we sincerely repent. We “push delete” and then stand before God with confidence.
- F. The son did not mention being a hired servant as he had originally planned in verse 19. The way he viewed his relationship with his father was changed as he received grace from his father.
²¹*And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” (Lk. 15:21)*
- G. The father interrupted his son’s confession and gave him the best robes, the family ring, and new shoes, along with killing a fatted calf to host a feast to celebrate the return of his son (v. 22-24).
²²*The father said to his servants, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴for my son was dead and is alive again...” They began to be merry. (Lk. 15:22-24)*
1. **Best robe:** These were reserved for honored guests. God provides the new garment (Gen. 3:21; Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:4). We have a new beginning with God as a first-class citizen.
 2. **Ring:** Authority was entrusted to him to represent the family business in the community.
 3. **Sandals:** Slaves did not have sandals; only the children received family privileges.
 4. **Fatted calf:** A calf was killed for special occasions and provided meat for over fifty guests. Calves were especially fattened and were killed only for very special occasions.
 5. **Be merry:** The father called all to celebrate the recovery and return of his son. The Father enjoys the prodigal on the day he repents, even with many areas needing transformation.
- H. God feels gladness over His returning prodigals and restores them to His favor. We see this in the way the father gave his son the best robe and family ring *on the very day he returned.*
- I. The Father calls all in His family to rejoice with Him in the recovery of His children.
²⁵*His older son...heard music and dancing...²⁸He was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹So he...said to his father, “These many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment...you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰But as soon as this son of yours came...you killed the fatted calf.” ³¹He said, “Son...all that I have is yours. ³²It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again...” (Lk. 15:25-32)*
1. **Angry:** The elder son was angry and would not participate in the celebration.
 2. **Pleaded:** The father pleaded with the son to enter the celebration.

3. ***I never:*** The son had no sense of his weakness or gratitude for his father's kindness.
 - a. Just as the father ran to meet his younger son, he also left the banquet to find his elder son to plead with him. The father is consistent in his love to pursue both sons. With the younger son, his love is seen in forgiving him for his immoral behavior. With the elder, it is seen in forgiving him for his anger, pride, and refusal to participate in the family celebration. Both sons acted in ways that hurt the family. The elder son was not aware of his sin.
 - b. The elder son saw his years with his father as "servitude" for which he did not receive proper recognition or repayment. The roots of bitterness were sown in thinking that he did not receive as much as he deserved.
 4. ***This son of yours:*** The elder son had accusations and criticism against his brother.
 5. ***All is yours:*** The remainder of the inheritance belonged to the elder son.
 6. ***It is right to be glad:*** The Holy Spirit is proclaiming this message to us and through us.
- J. We must break our agreement with the enemy's lies and with the trauma of shame. We proclaim liberty to the captives of shame that hinders us from receiving freely. We are justified freely by God's grace (Rom. 3:24).
- K. We agree with what the Word says about God's heart, stop negotiating with God, and receive freely. The Lord says that we are not a burden to Him nor are we too difficult for Him to receive.