

Pastor Chris Matthis
Epiphany Lutheran Church, Castle Rock, Colorado
Lent 4, Series C
Saturday, March 26th, 2022
Sunday, March 27th, 2022

Sermon: Becoming the Father (Sermon Outline)

Text: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Focus: God loves us with an everlasting, never-ending love.

Function: That they would come home to the Father's love.

Structure: Image-Based (Meditation on an Image)

Locus: "That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom..." (SC, 2nd Article of Apostles' Creed).

I. Introduction – Are we too familiar with the Parable of the Prodigal Son?

A. We think we know it all too well, so it's hard to hear something new.

B. Alternate titles:

- Lost Son(s) – Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son(s)
- Waiting Father (Helmut Thielicke)
- Prodigal Father (Barbara Brown Taylor)
- Prodigal God (Tim Keller)

II. First Look at Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal* (1669)



Matthis 3

- A. Painted by Rembrandt towards end of a life full of proud parties—and spectacular suffering.
 - B. *The Prodigal in the Brothel* (1637) – Rembrandt depicted himself and his wife in debauchery
 - C. Story: Nouwen at Hermitage gazes all day at painting
 - “There were as many paintings of the *The Prodigal Son* as there were changes in the light.”
- III. The Younger Son
- A. Represents the “tax collectors and sinners... drawing near” to Jesus (Luke 15:1).
 - B. “I wish you were dead!” (v. 12)
 - C. Pigs (unclean) offensive to Jews
 - D. Prepared apology as form of *penance* (works righteousness) (vv. 18-19)
- IV. The Forgiving Father
- A. Represents God—and main character of story – “There was a *man* who had two sons...” (15:11)
 - B. Prodigal (Reckless) Grace
 1. Definition: **prodigal** – “adj. wastefully or recklessly extravagant; n. a person who is wasteful of his or her money, possessions, etc.”
 2. Foolishly gives younger son the property to his own shame in the community.
 3. Runs to the son (shameful)
 4. Interrupts the apology (cp. v. 21 & 18-19)
 5. No penance needed
 - C. Reclaims the Son

1. New clothes & ring
2. Party
3. “For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (v. 24).

V. The Elder Son

A. Angry and resentful

Parishioner: “I never liked the parable of the prodigal son.”

B. Sees his father as a taskmaster – *doulein* = “to slave” NOT “to serve”!

C. Wants to celebrate with *friends*—not Father

D. Assumes worst about his brother (cp. vv. 13 & 30) – no explicit mention of prostitutes

E. Alienated from family – “This son of yours” (v. 30)

1. Denounces brother

2. Denounces father

VI. The Entreating Father

A. Father *goes* out to elder son

B. Gives everything (100%) to elder son – “All that I have is yours” (v. 31)

C. Not just fitting, but *necessary* (Greek: *dei*) to celebrate

VII. Who are you in the story?

1. Joke: “Fatted calf!”

2. Younger Son

3. Older Son

4. Father? – God wants both his sons to become forgiving fathers.

VIII. Jesus in the Parable

A. Teller of the tale

B. Younger Son

- “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (**Matt. 11:19**).
- “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).
- Jesus spends everything on our salvation!

C. Elder Son

- “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand” (**John 3:35**).
- “So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise’” (**John 5:19**).
- “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (**Phil. 2:8**).
- Jesus is perfectly obedient for our salvation.

D. Father

- “Felt compassion” (v. 20) – *splagchnidzomai* only used of JESUS in NT!
- “Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him” (**John 5:23**).
- “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’” (**John 14:9**).
- “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves” (**John 14:11**).
- Jesus and the Father are of “one substance” (*homoousios*), one purpose, and one God.