

A Father and His Three Sons (Part 1)

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 15:1-2, 11-32



Big Idea

We often think fulfillment is found in places far off from the Father. In our wandering, we enjoy moments of freedom but soon find ourselves enslaved. When we come to ourselves and return home, we find God more merciful and kind than we could ever have dared to hope!

(1) The Approach (vv. 11-13)

If I had to sum up the younger son's approach to fulfillment in a word it would be: self-indulgence. The idea here is immediate gratification. Don't hold back. Get all the pleasure you can as quickly as you can. Just bypass the father and go straight for his stuff.

When he comes to his father there in v. 12 and says, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me," he is essentially saying: "Father, I wish you were already dead. I'm tired of sitting around waiting for you to die. I want your stuff. And I want it now."

(2) The Fallout (vv. 14-16)

There comes a time when this self-indulgent approach to fulfillment and joy will break down. I love what John Piper says on this point: "Running away from God starts by feeling free and ends in utter misery."

(3) The Way Home (vv. 17-24)

In vv. 17-20a, we are given four little details that, I think, outline quite vividly for us what is meant by the biblical idea of repentance: (1) He came to himself; (2) He owned his sin; (3) He understood his place; and (4) He got up and went home.

In vv. 20b-24, we are given a breathtaking view into the Father's heart for us:

Snapshot #1: The Window's Waiting—He is by the window. He is anxiously awaiting his our return.

Snapshot #2: The Race of Grace—He doesn't merely sit back and wait for us to make our way to the front door. He can't wait. He is off and running.

Snapshot #3: The Kiss of Kindness—We still smell like swine. There is mud and muck on our garments. But the father doesn't care. He embraces and kisses us anyway.

Snapshot #4: The Invited Interruption—He won't let us pay Him back or "earn our keep." He gives His grace freely.

Snapshot #5: The Prodigal Party—He out-prodigals the prodigal. Where sin abounds grace abounds all the more. He re-establishes our status as his children and tells the whole neighborhood about it!

The only perfect Son of God was cast out of the Father's home so that we could be welcomed in. He was stripped naked and mocked so that we could be clothed and celebrated. He was given sour wine and a cup brimming with the wrath of God so that we could sit around the table and feast with our Father. He was forsaken so that we could be found. He was put to death so that we could live—so that could come home to God and find our fulfillment in Him once more.

Reflection Questions



- In what ways have you seen this parable play out in real life? Have you known others with stories like this younger son's? Is this how you came to know the Lord?
- How have you been buying into the lie of self-indulgence = fulfillment lately? In what ways do you need to repent and return home?
- Is it hard for you to receive the free mercy of God? After you sin, do you find yourself feeling like you should pay Him back or earn His blessing again in some way? How does the gospel answer to this struggle? Why is it so important that we let the Father interrupt us in this?