

The Invaluable Lesson You Can Learn from the Prodigal Son This Christmas

Read Time: 4 Minutes 2 Seconds

As we approach Christmas, we prepare to celebrate the glorious birth of our Savior—a day full of the impossible made possible, redemption on display and reconciliation on the horizon. The birth of Jesus is a magnificent story of hope!

So, this Christmas, no matter your current circumstances, relational dynamics or family story, there is hope for redemption and reconciliation available for you. God is returning the hearts of fathers to their sons and daughters! At Christmas time, we don't often hear the story of the prodigal son, but it is a parable of a beautiful hope displayed in the return of a son that we can cling to this Christmas.

The tale is familiar to most of us: A farmer has two sons, of which the younger (the prodigal) is wayward, rebellious and worldly. He exits his dad's house with his (supposed) inheritance. He parties it up with prostitutes and pimps, and soon he's stone-broke. Half starving to death, the kid winds up working at the pig farm, slopping hogs. In the midst of his misery, this young man has an epiphany: What am I doing at this pig palace when I could be living at my father's farm? So he comes to himself and heads home. This is where the story gets really good! The dad has prepared for his son's reentry because he has been living in hopeful observation.

Furthermore, the father, understanding that shame could derail his boy's reunion, and seeing his son a long way off, runs out to greet him. Throwing his strong arms around his son, he begins kissing him. The boy, riddled with disgrace and

wallowing in humiliation, spills his guts: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son," (Luke 15:21). But his father has envisioned this reunion and has rehearsed his son's reentry a million times in his imagination. In utter exhilaration, this dad shouts to his servants, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found" (vv. 22–24).

This father was able to meet his son while the young man was still a long way from home because he was watching in earnest expectation. As Christmas approaches, it is important that we embrace our heavenly Father's faith for reconciliation, which He demonstrates by sending His one and only Son in order that we might have access to an extraordinary faith for redemption. Just as God has received us with joy and expectation, we can do the same in celebration of Christ's incarnation and His imminent return.

The apostle Paul highlights the main secret of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17–20: "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Did you catch the secret of reconnection? God's policy of reconciliation is "not counting their trespasses against them."

He goes on to call us ambassadors of reconciliation who appeal to the wayward on Christ's behalf. In other words, the preparation for the reconcilers (those living at the father's

farm, so to speak) is to embrace the kind of forgiveness that restores the standard of righteousness and opens the door for re-entry. As Word made flesh, Christ has nothing for which to repent. We are reconciled to God through repentance of our sin. In gratitude for his forgiveness and grace, we can extend the same opportunity for reconciliation to those God has placed in our lives.

I shared this message with a congregation at Bethel, and two hours after I prophetically proclaimed out loud, "Prepare for reentry," one of my grandsons who hadn't been following the Lord for years texted this to me: "Papa, I'm not doing good. I'm making bad choices. I need your help. Can we meet?" His life turned around that week, and he enrolled in the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry, where he is thriving as I write this! Physical obedience brings spiritual release. For example, it's apparent that the father in the prodigal story was saving a special calf, a robe, a ring and sandals because he was anticipating his son's return. He didn't just believe God for his boy's return; he prepared in faith, anticipating God's redemption in their situation.

I want to encourage you to prepare your hearts this Christmas for the return of your prodigals as you believe God for your miracle of reconciliation. The more hopeless your situation seems, the greater the glory of your restoration will be.
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