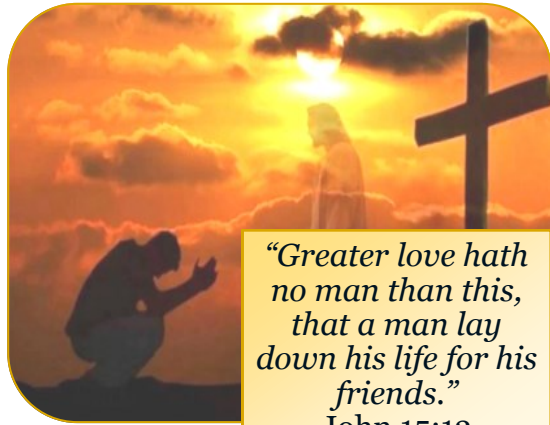


# The Homecoming

"Parable of the Prodigal Son"



There are three parables in Luke 15. They are similar in content, but each is unique in its approach to the same idea. The parable of the lost sheep tells how the shepherd goes out to hunt the sheep even though he had ninety-nine other ones.

The parable of the lost coin tells how the woman sought the one coin that was missing and then called everyone together to celebrate with her. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) tells how the son asked for his inheritance and then left on his own. The father did not chase after him. He allowed him to do "his thing" and then when he came home the father rejoiced with him. This is the only one that talks about the feelings of the son that remains at home. These are all talking about wandering away from God and then being found.

I think Christ was talking to the crowd

that included the Pharisees and tax collectors as well as other people. Christ was relating the same experience but in a different way each time hoping the message would reach the people.

Notice that the shepherd went after the sheep. The woman searched for the coin. The father did not chase after the son who wanted his inheritance right then. He allowed him to realize the problems of his decision but welcomed him when he returned with a great banquet. There are actually three important characters in this parable, the father, the son that wandered away and the son that stayed home. We will concentrate today on the son that wandered away and how that story ties in with the other two parables in the same chapter.

The son had known a great life. His father had many fields and perhaps that was part of the problem. The young man had much but wanted more. He wasn't satisfied with how things were going and wanted to lead "the good life." Sometimes we want to think we can handle things on our own. The son that wandered knew that he had done wrong, so he swallowed his pride and went home. Sometimes we have to do the same thing.

We have to ask forgiveness because we are all guilty of sin. When we do, the Lord is there waiting with the best robe, the ring and sandals, and a great banquet with the fatted calf. He will rejoice with us. (Luke 15:22) We have to be willing to admit we sin and need to accept the gifts of love and forgiveness.

*The difference  
between mercy and  
grace? Mercy gave  
the prodigal son a  
second chance.  
Grace gave him a  
feast.*  
-Max Lucado

I am reminded of a fire that has burned down. In the days of the wood or coal furnace, a person could take a bellows to the embers and blow life back into the fire for a short time. The flame burned again, but it had to be fed so the fire would catch with the new coal or wood that was added. The Holy Spirit is always with us, but sometimes we need the bellows to rekindle our faith and then it needs to be fed. We can fuel our faith with prayer and Bible study. We can do it with fellowship with other Christians. We can do it through reaching out to help those who are in need. The Holy Spirit is always willing to help us, but we need to take action. Christ took the first step; the second step is our choice.

The three parables go together, yet each had its own lesson. The main characters all rejoiced when the lost was found. Each one had a sincere love feeling. Each item had a personal value, not just a monetary value. So we all have a real The three parables go together, yet each had its own lesson.



The main characters all rejoiced when the lost was found. Each one had a sincere love feeling. Each item had a personal value, not just a monetary value. So we all have a real value to God. I believe He rejoices when we come home.



## "Footprints in the Sand"

by Mary Stevenson

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

Prayer: Thank You for being with us throughout our life. Thank you for the knowledge that even though we sin You will forgive us if we ask. Help us to keep the fire burning so we can witness for You to those in doubt and those who don't know Your amazing love. Amen

1. Why do you think the son wanted his inheritance? How can we sometimes be like that son?
2. Why does God allow us to make wrong decisions?
3. What can help us through making decisions?
4. How can we rekindle our fire?
5. Are we the prodigal son?

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"When I'm worried,  
it's usually because I'm  
trying to do everything  
myself. When I'm at  
peace, it's usually  
because I remember  
that God is in control."

DaveWillis.org