

Introduction:

- It took me a few years but I have come to agree with one child's definition of Fathers Day and he said, "It is just like Mothers Day, only you do not spend as much on the present." With that said, that is also why Father's Day always worried me. I'm afraid that I will get a gift I can't afford.
- FB some pictures of my dad. The man in the picture is my dad. "*Children's children are the crown of old men, And the glory of children is their father.*" (Proverbs 17:6, NKJV)
- Jesus often spoke in pictures when He taught the people. Those pictures are called parables.
 - We looked at a parable two weeks ago. When Jesus used the expression, "A man who has a lamp doesn't cover it. No, he places it in the room so that the whole room gets light. You are the light of the world."
 - A parable essentially is a comparison, it's putting something alongside something else to compare. This is fundamental in our study of parables, that parables were originally to be heard and not to be read. What came out of that was the fact that the hearers of parables had to make an instant appraisal of what the teacher was saying. So there wasn't time for them to sit down with a black-and-white text and dissect each detail, and try and correspond it to spiritual truth, whilst we can do that now they did not have that privilege. They had to, in a moment, grasp what the speaker was saying, and because of that we need to remember that really in all the parables there is one main fundamental point that the Lord Jesus was getting across.
- I want us to look at man in the picture in the third parable, Luke 15:11-32. I want you to focus on the central figure...a very good Father!
- **Someone once said, A boy loves his mother, but will follow his father.** Lets look at the man in this picture...the Father and hopefully we will follow Him.

1. The Key to the Parable is the Father

- a. The context of the parable: Luke 14, Jesus is at the home of a leader of Pharisees. Many people were watching him. Jesus has been quite confrontative with these religious leaders at their party. Chapter 15 is bringing things to a head. Notorious sinners are coming to Jesus to be near him. And the Pharisees are putting distance between themselves and Jesus.
- b. In Luke 15 Jesus gives us three parables in a row. I'd say Jesus was trying to make a point. He is comparing something in the pictures to us. Those parables are: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.
 - i. Common to each parable is something of value is lost. And this is important to Jesus! Each one of you are valuable to God. That is how He sees you. That is his point you are valuable to me!
 - ii. The main point of the parables is the heart of searcher in recovering that which is valuable.
- c. I want us to look at man in the picture in the third parable, Luke 15:11-32. His heart is revealed to us as He seeks to recover the precious hearts of his two sons. In it we discover the heart of a Good Father. It gives us both something to aim for on this Father's day and also something to celebrate about our heavenly Father and hopefully lead us to enjoy being with Him. What can we learn from the man in this picture? We can learn much but first we have to see the sons before we realize how good the Father actually is.

2. The Boys in the Picture Are Brats (annoying spoiled impolite child)

- a. The way Jesus tells this story causes us to dislike both of these boys.

- i. The first son we dislike because he demands his portion of the inheritance and goes off and wastes his father's money on hookers, wine and song. In that culture at that time this kid would have been hated by anyone hearing the story. And they would have rejoiced at his failure and sinking into the pig pen. Serves him right for disrespecting the father! NOTE: the notorious sinners would have known clearly that Jesus was referring to them.
- ii. The second son we dislike because he is so stuck up, proud and arrogant that he will not come in to celebrate that his brother has come home. His brother has just underwent an amazing change of heart and is returning home a different man than when he left. The second son wants nothing to do with this or his father's joy. NOTE: The Pharisees would have known clearly that Jesus was referring to them.
- b. Both of these boys have the same heart. Neither of them want anything to do with the Father. They fail to see how good their father is.
 - i. The first son basically is saying, "I would rather have your money than you dad." I would rather go off on an adventure without you. You are not all that important to me.
 - ii. The second son basically is saying, "I'd rather celebrate with my friends than with you dad." Luke 15:29. Do you know what that does to a father's heart? ...that wanting to celebrate without him?
- c. Both of these boys felt entitled to what the Father had and they respond in different ways.
 - i. The first son left home with his portion of the wealth and without the Father in his heart. He felt entitled and could not wait till father was dead so he could have his portion and be gone. That is what entitlement produced in his heart.
 - ii. The second son stayed at home with his portion and without the Father in his heart. This son stayed at home and couldn't wait till his father was dead so he did not have to be a *slave* any longer. The expectation of entitlement produced the same fruit: a valuing of the Father's goods without valuing the Father.
- d. Yip! These boys make you dislike them. This is important to this parable. *If we fail to recognize ourselves in these people we will fail to recognize the Lord.* This is what sets up the parable/picture to show us how great the Father in the picture is, our Father.

3. The Man in the Picture is a Good Father

- a. How the Father relates to each son reveals to us the Father heart of God. Neither son wanted the father's presence they just wanted the father's wealth. Neither son longed for a relationship with the father they wanted to be with their friends. The younger was a riotous rebel spending the Father's wealth. The elder was a religious/compliant rebel earning the Father's wealth. (doing to please the father). Neither enjoyed being a son.
- b. The Father in this picture is Wise. He really understands each of us as we actually are.
 - i. He knows if he is to ever have a son he must first let him let him go/be broken before he returns. He knows that the son has lots of freedom in the home, answering to no one but the Father. But out there, the Father knows that the son will become a slave. God forces no one to stay. He did not force Adam and Eve to refrain from eating the fruit. To be forced to be a son is to not have a son. "He is not thinking will the boy grow more mature in the far country, He is asking the anxious question, 'How will he come back?'" Helmut Theilke
 - ii. To the second son, the father says, after being rebuked, belittled, and 'chewed out' vs. 31 "My child/my son" The Father does not meet anger with anger or bitterness with bitterness. He in wisdom gently reminds the elder son who he is. Our heavenly Father is so wise. 1 Tim 1:17 *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.* NKJV "*the glory of a child is their father.*"
- c. The Father in this picture is generous.

- i. vs. 12 He divides his wealth between his sons. He is not respecter of person. He is showing no favoritism. What each of them receive is not their's it is the fathers. They are not deserving but He is freely giving. Do you see the voice of Jesus in this parable? He is speaking to sinner and Pharisee alike. It is becoming clearer His words in Jn 14:9 "*If you have seen me you have seen the Father.*"
- d. The Father in this picture can be trusted.
 - i. The first son has become a slave. He can't trust his 'friends', but he can trust his Father. The only hope this 'slave' has is returning to the Father in hopes of becoming his servant. He knows his father's servants are far better off than he is so he longs to return, why? Because he knows he can trust his father's goodness and kindness. Father can be trusted.
 - ii. The elder son also see the himself as a servant and refuse to be a son. Lk 15:29 "*All these years I have slaved for you...*" The father does not reinforce the slave mentality that his son is living in but instead presents himself to this boy as the Father he really is, a father that can be trusted. He invites him into the family that he is already a part of to celebrate a brother who has come home. Father values relationship. He wants his boys to trust him. If there is one thing I know that God desires, He desire us to trust in His love, and his kindness. We can trust Him.
- e. The Father in this picture is longing and loving! He wants relationship with both of his boys! And he longs for them to have relationship with each other. Father wants a family! He knows our weakness and yet longs to love us.
 - i. Each son is alienated from Father.
 - 1. Watch what happens: vs 20 The father longs for the return of a son who comes home. The first son returns and his Father sees him from a long way off. That tells me the *Father is looking* (this reveals his longing) and that even from a distance he recognizes that the man in the distance is his son! When he sees his son *the Father is filled with love and compassion.* And the Father *ran to his son*, embraced him and kissed him. That is a picture of a father living with longing in his heart to have his sons near.
 - 2. The second son hears all the celebration from the field and he is angry! Watch what happens: vs 28 The father longs for the return of a son who never left home. The father hears of the second sons anger and his father *came out* him and begged him to come in.
 - ii. The Father in the picture is one who longs to have a family. He is full of compassion and he tenderly deals with all *in a very honoring way!*
- f. The Father in this picture is is forgiving.
 - i. When the father's son comes home, he is repentant. He knows he deserves to be servant but the Father forgives him and makes him a son! vs 22-24. The younger son returns and is given the best robe, a ring, new shoes, and a party! (Generous father too) Our heavenly father is so forgiving!
 - ii. To the older son, the Father is forgiving. He reminds him of who he and not of what he has become. He reminds him of a relationship that is restored because a younger brother has come home.
- g. We we see our heavenly Father as wise, generous, trust worthy, long for us and loving us, and wildly forgiving it does something to our hearts! It makes me want to run to him. It makes me want to be like Him.

Conclusion:

- I know this is Father's Day and I thought how wonderful it would be for all of us to get reacquainted with our heavenly Father.

- The key to understanding this parable is knowing that there is a heavenly father who values you. Even though you may see yourself a little ‘bratty’ today. You are valuable to Him.
 - He is wise-He is not going to force you to become a son. But He will love you until you become one.
 - Your Father in heaven is generous. He is offering you today what you do not deserve and He is doing it with the utmost honor and gentleness that He can give you. It matters not if you are the younger son or the elder son. You need the Father!
 - Your Father in heaven is accepting. He runs to you not away from you. You may be a younger brother who is coming home to Father or a disappointed older brother living in the Father house. The good thing about the Father is that He comes to us and accepts us as we are.
 - Your Father in heaven is longing for you.
 - He longs for you to be a son not a slave.
 - He longs for you to want Him not just what He has to offer you.
- Someone once said, A boy loves his mother, but will follow his father. When I look at the picture of the heart of this Father in our text today, I say, “That is a father I will follow!”
- “*...And the glory of children is their father.*” (Proverbs 17:6, NKJV) Lets glory in the Father today!