

**Introduction:**

- In this series, I want to continue to talk about the Fatherhood of God. I want to help us have a better relationship with our heavenly Father. I want to heal the orphan spirit in all of us. I want us to see our Father as He really is. And I want that relationship with our heavenly Father to translate into our relationships within our families and with each other.
- **“So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.””** (Romans 8:15, NLT)  
What has to happen in the heart of a person to cause them to cry, “ABBA, Father!”?
- IE. The Pevensie children, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy are (orphans) sent out of besieged London during World War II, unaware of the magical journey they are beginning. In the old country house where they are sent, the children enter an old wardrobe and arrive in the land of Narnia, where animals talk and magic exists. This is the first Narnia story by C.S. Lewis, and it tells the story of how these four children/these orphans becoming sons—with the help of Aslan, the Great Lion—are able to defeat the White Witch who holds Narnia in eternal winter.
- **“No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.”** (John 14:18, NLT)
  - ▶ Gr. Orphans - This word means “bereaved,” “orphaned,” “orphan.”. Occasionally it has the figurative sense of “abandoned,” “deprived.” The word occurs twice in the NT. Jms. 1:27, and in Jn. 14:18, where the use is figurative. Jesus will not leave his disciples “orphaned,” i.e., “abandoned” or “unprotected.” Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (p. 734). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
  - ▶ The orphan feels alone, abandon, afraid.
  - ▶ The orphan spirit refers to a spiritual condition in which some Christians profess outwardly to know God as Father, but experience an internal contradiction to that belief. Deep down they struggle to comprehend that God really loves them. The Bible indicates that when father’s and children’s hearts are turned from each other, a curse can result. An orphan has no name, no family, no rights, no inheritance. An orphan has to succeed on his own, make his own way and make a name for himself. An orphan strives to gain approval and acceptance.
  - ▶ By “orphan,” I am referring to a sense of abandonment, loneliness, alienation and isolation. Some have felt these for so long they think it is normal.

**I. The Shepherd - Does What Ever It Takes Lk 15:3-7**

- A. Love/Value (the worth of something) Compels Him (The Shepherd), why? - Something valuable is missing.
  1. No obstacle is to great
  2. No danger is to overwhelming
  3. The shepherd, in spite of everything, continues to seek until he finds the lost sheep.
  4. The shepherd goes to great length to recover the sheep because it belongs to him. It is His Property! You were created for communion with God.

- B. Joyfully carries it home. He is not angry at the lamb. He does not abuse the lamb. He is happy it is safe and found.
  - 1. Rejoice with me! I have found my lost lamb.
    - a) Jesus is calling the critics to rejoice with the Father in the finding of the lost sheep.
    - b) Jesus cares about the 99 but it is that one that is lost and abandoned that excites His heart for recovering. (What do you want restored in 2016?)
  - 2. I will carry it home. Back to the place of belonging. Back to the place of community.
- C. There is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents. It is not saying that Jesus is not thankful for those in the House. Heaven rejoices because what belongs to God is valuable and it has been returned.
  - 1. Again Jesus wants His critics to see the joy in heaven over the sinner that returns home. The Shepherd/Father goes to great lengths for what is valuable to him.

## II. The Woman - Does a Thorough Search Lk 15:8-10

- A. Love/value (The worth of something) compels her to look for the missing coin. Something valuable is missing.
  - 1. The woman, like the shepherd, goes to great length to recover the coin because it belongs to her. It is His/her Property!
- B. "In no other religion in the whole world does one come know God as the One who in His love seeks the lost person to save him through His grace." NICNT p. 403
  - 1. In other religions we see how man yearns for God and seeks him, but in the Bible we see how God in Christ seeks man to save him for now and all eternity.
  - 2. Because Jesus paid with His own blood the redemption of all mankind, every person has significant, infinite value in God's sight. Therefore with great thoroughness He tears up everything, every where, multiple times until He finds that of value that is missing.
  - 3. What draws 'sinners' to Jesus is not finding a righteousness that is full of pride and contempt but a holiness which was associated with the most compassionate and tenderest of love.
- C. The characteristic feature of these two parables is not so much the joy over the repentant sinner as it is the love that goes out to seek the sinner before he repents. He is thorough.

## III. The Father - Looks, Loves, Longs, and Runs to His Sons

- A. The added dimension of this parable is the insight into human nature. Like the sheep and like the coin, the sons are lost.
  - 1. The prodigal son reveals the human nature in rebellion breaking away from God.
    - a) He hurls his life into sin.
    - b) He soon finds how empty and unpleasant life is in the 'far country.'
    - c) His first step requires true repentance ( a turning away from the 'far country' and a turning to God.) He begins to realize how miserable his life is.

- d) He must realize that he has no right to claim that he should be accepted as a child of God. vs. **"and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."** (Luke 15:19, NLT)
- (1) This is an orphan who is getting his needs met. Much like many in the body of Christ.
- (2) He takes on the identity of a servant and not that of a son all because he feels that he is unworthy.
2. He did not know that his father continued to remain true in his love for his son. His assumption is that the father will be angry. His assumption is that the father will be disappointed. His assumption is that he can never be a son of his father again.
- a) The Father is not afraid of time.
- b) **"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."** (2 Peter 3:9, NLT) He is not looking for right behavior but for repentance.
- c) While He is being patient, Jesus through the influence of Holy Spirit is working on the heart of the son. The son may forget the father but that does not change the Father's seeking of love and grace. He become vulnerable in returning.
- B. Vs 21-24 The Father begets a son and not a servant.
1. vs 21 The son begins his plea to be a servant but the Father does not even hear his words. God wants sons first, not servants. Of course he wants his son to serve in the house but he must become a son first or his service will always be to obtain merit/favor, to perform, he will live with fear of not doing enough. He will be a slave without sonship.
2. The Father does not humiliate the son. He does not punish him! He accepts him! He gives him full sonship status and all the privileges.
3. He re-establishes His son's identity! Everything that follows is about affirming that His son is really a son!
- a) Kisses - greeting of acceptance. An act of intimacy/closeness.
- b) Bring the finest robe-"**I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.**" (Isaiah 61:10, NLT) **"For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."**" (Romans 4:3, NLT) **"... But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, ..."** (Romans 5:17, NLT) Believing and receiving the righteousness of God was affirming the prodigal that he was not a servant but a son! The robe was not given to cover his sin. That was already done the robe was given to establish the sons identity.
- c) Ring for his finger - signet ring, giving him the authority of the family.
- d) Sandals for his feet - slaves don't have shoes but sons do. Gospel of peace.

- e) Kill the fatted calf! We must celebrate. For this son was dead in the 'far away' place but now he lives. (lost sheep). He was lost but now he is found. (Lost coin) It is the Father's joy in the relationship that is most valuable to him...his son!
- C. The older brother will not come and welcome his brother. He is a slave in his father's house.
1. vs. 29, "I have slaved for you...not once did I transgress."
  2. These are words of an orphan spirit. I have worked. I did not sin. You did not honor me.
  3. You have always been with me and everything I have is yours. What a tragedy to be a son and live like a servant.
  4. Again we hear the Father says, "We must celebrate. For this son was dead in the 'far away' place but now he lives. (lost sheep). He was lost but now he is found. (Lost coin)" It is the Father's joy in the relationship that is most valuable to him...his son!
  5. God wants relationship at a level that causes us to cry ABBA, Father.

### Conclusion:

- What is God like: He goes to what ever extent to find His missing child. His search is so thorough He leaves no stone unturned to what is most valuable to Him...you. He is so patiently waiting for your return that He is constantly looking, loving, longing and running to me you.
- In his book, Capital of the World, Ernest Hemingway wrote about a father in Spain who had a son named Paco. Because of his son's rebellion, Paco and his father were estranged. The father was bitter and angry with his son, and kicked him out of the home. After years of bitterness, the father's anger ended and he realized his mistake. He began to look for Paco, with no results. Finally, in desperation, the father placed an ad in the Madrid newspaper. The ad read, "PACO, ALL IS FORGIVEN. MEET ME AT THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE AT 9AM TOMORROW. LOVE, YOUR FATHER." Paco is a rather common name in Spain, and Hemingway wrote when the father arrived the next morning, there were 600 young men-all named Paco-waiting and hoping to receive the forgiveness of their fathers."
- Invitation - IF you need forgiveness today, Your Father has placed an add here: "All is forgiven. Meet me here, right now! Love your Father!
- Invitation - maybe you met God a long time ago but your returned home a servant. You live like the older brother a servant. Maybe you need to come and have a good cry on Father's lap. You have had all the Father has but lived like a slave. Come become a son today.
- Sonship lets us cry ABBA, Father!