**What a Glorious Father**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**Sunday Morning**

**February 3, 2019**

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

**Jesus was a skillful storyteller, and perhaps His most Masterful Parable was that of the Prodigal Son**

Saints, when Jesus told this story, His audience was composed of tax collectors and sinners who were drawn to Him as well as self-righteous scribes and Pharisees who criticized Him for His association with sinners. Both these groups needed a lesson on the grace and mercy of God, and that’s exactly what the parable of the prodigal son delivers.

Saints, the parable of the prodigal son who asked his father for his share of the estate, left home, and wasted his inheritance. But perhaps the most amazing character in this story is the forgiving father.

Jesus was teaching that no one has sinned to such a degree that it’s impossible to turn back to God in repentance and receive forgiveness.

**1 John 3:1-3**

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Saints, let’s recap the past 2 weeks regarding the

**The Older Son**

Angry, Bitter, Resentful, Self-Righteous, Jealous, Rejection, Unforgiveness, Disrespect, Accusation, Caustic Biting and Piercing Words

**The Younger Son “The Prodigal Son”**

Desires, Decision, Departure, Wandering and Wanting

**God (Our Father)**

**The Steps of the Father to His Son**

**1. Wounded Heart**

The prodigal’s father was hurt by his son’s desire to have his inheritance early and leave the home he’d given him.

**2. Wondered about him Continually**

Like any parent whose child is far from home, this dad was concerned for his son—whether he was making good choices or was in need.

**3. Waited Patiently**

As parents today wait for renegade sons and daughters to return, this father longed to see his son.

**4. Watched for him**

His son was never far from this father’s thoughts as he watched the road to see if he was returning

**5. Wanted his son to Return Soon**

Whatever had happened in his son’s life would never cause this dad to reject him. His desire was to see him as soon as possible.

**6. Welcomed him Home**

Eventually the day came when the father saw his son on the road while he was still a long way off. He felt compassion and ran to meet him. Instead of greeting him with reproofs, he repeatedly embraced and kissed his son despite his filthy condition.

The young man barely managed to get out his confession of sin and of unworthiness to be called his son before his father called the servants to bring out the best robe, a ring, and sandals to clothe him. Then he told them to kill the fattened calf and prepare a feast to celebrate his son’s return.

Saints, through this story, Jesus was using an earthly father to depict the readiness of the heavenly Father to forgive those who come to Him in humble repentance, no matter how far they have strayed from Him in the past.

**Matthew 18:11-14**

11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?

13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

**Isaiah 33:22**

“(For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us);”

Jesus was showing the scribes and Pharisees God’s attitude toward repentant sinners and conveying to the tax collectors and sinners that His Father was willing to forgive and welcome them if they’d confess and return to Him.

**Romans 10:9-13**

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Saints, we can each see ourselves in one of the characters in this parable—the rebellious child who’s far away from God, the forgiving parent who welcomes him home, or the bitter sibling who doesn’t think the prodigal deserves to be welcomed.

Running away from the Lord and living in sin is never the way to find happiness. Like the prodigal, we’ll eventually find ourselves disillusioned and despairing. Yet the heavenly Father forgives and welcomes us home when we forsake our sin and return to him.

**2 Peter 3:9**

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

God our Father will give us a new beginning, and there will be a great celebration in heaven. The only hope for all of us is the grace, love, and forgiveness of almighty God. Since mankind is appointed for death and then judgment, we must not put off the decision to repent and trust Christ as our Savior.

**Hebrews 9:27-28**

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Saints, Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty we all deserve for our sin. Through faith in Him and His sacrifice for us, we can be saved.

**What God Offers Repentant Prodigals**

**1. Forgiveness**

On the basis of Christ’s death and our faith in Him, we can receive forgiveness.

**Ephesians 4:30-32**

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

**1 John 1:9**

“If we’ll confess our sins, God will be faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”

**2. Acceptance**

The Lord accepts us not on the basis of our good works but because of Christ’s death on the cross, which paid our sin debt in full. Each one who believes in Him becomes a child of God who is welcomed into His household.

**Ephesians 1:3-6**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

**3. Restoration**

We are given eternal life, and God restores our dignity, attitudes, and thinking.

**1 Peter 5:10**

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

**4. Rejoicing**

Not only do we rejoice but so do our family and friends who have been waiting for us to come home to the Father. But the greatest celebration of all is in heaven whenever a sinner repents (v. 10).

**Luke 15:7**

“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

Saints, returning to the Lord is the beginning of a relationship with Him that can never be severed. Although we may sin and experience His loving discipline, we can never lose our salvation.

**John 10:27-30**

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one."

**Ephesians 1:11-14**

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

**Romans 8:38-39**

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Saints, Jesus said:

**Hebrews 13:5-6**

5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

**In Closing:**

**1. Has there ever been a time in your life when you’ve come in humble repentance to God, confessing that you’ve messed up your life and need His forgiveness?**

**2. If so, how have you seen the Lord’s restoration in your life?**

**3. If not, why are you delaying?**

**4. How has the representation of the earthly father in this story enriched your understanding of your heavenly Father?**

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**