

# **Salvation**

## **What's In It for Me?**

**Luke 15:11-32**

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### **What's In It for Me? - Salvation**

Some believe that if humankind is left to its own that the results will be positive and good. This was true once when God first made man but because of sin and its destructive character there is no one who is righteous. When left to his own devices each of us becomes self absorbed and selfish. The consequence of this self orientation is always destructive.

Coming Home to God brings us to the salvation of our souls. It is the only path that does! In this parable we see a son who comes home - to salvation.

**(Luke 15:11-32)**

**15:11 To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons.**

**15:12 The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.**

**15:13 "A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living.**

**15:14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.**

**15:15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs.**

**15:16 The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.**

**15:17 "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger!**

**15:18 I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,**

**15:19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man."**

**15:20 "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.**

**15:21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'**

**15:22 "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet.**

**15:23 And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast,**

**15:24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.**

**15:25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house,**

**15:26 and he asked one of the servants what was going on.**

**15:27 'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast. We are celebrating because of his safe return.'**

Jesus was a great storyteller. Many of His stories (Parables) teach us about following Him. Most of the time when we look at these stories, we concentrate on the cost of discipleship. In this message we are focused on the benefits of following Jesus.

Today we will look at the story most commonly called the "parable of the Prodigal Son" A Prodigal is a person who is Wasteful; Reckless; Extravagant; Unrestrained; Uncontrolled -REBELLIOUS!!! - SINFUL!!!

There is a movie made in 1954 called "The Wild One" A young, tough, charismatic Marlon Brando was asked, "What are you rebelling against?" He replied, "Whaddaya got?"

This is the prodigal son. He was ungrateful, unappreciative, insensitive, self-absorbed, and completely egocentric. He is like a child of 2 years of age that believes the world circulates around his playpen.

The problem is not wealth... The money was his own inheritance. It is rebellious, selfish sin. It begins with the words, "I want..." and it ends with the word, "now".

This Story teaches us a simple and powerful truth. No matter how far we have gone - we can come back home. What is "lost" can be "found". What is "trashed" can be "saved".

This wild young man **made three critical errors** in his thinking.

**1) He thought he was missing something.** Funny thing, in our culture "youth" is precious and old age is useless.

The truth: youth is wasted on the young! There is a lack of knowledge matched only by arrogance and assurance.

It is hard to be young There is so much you haven't seen or experienced. Surely, you are missing something of value out there! Surely, all those who have gone ahead are trying to keep you from all the good things in life!

**The heart of rebellion is distrust.** A serpent slithered into the garden of Eden and said something to the effect... "God does not want you to be like him." Eve did not trust God and neither did Adam. Young people rebel for one simple reason. They think they are being cheated.

Patsy Clairmont shares the following true story about her son, Jason: When he was 7, I sent him off to school one day and a little while later there was a knock at the door and I opened the door and it was Jason. I said "Jason, what are you doing here?" He said, "I've quit school!" I said, "Why have you quit school?" He said, "Well, it was too long, it was too hard, and it was too boring." I said, "Jason, you have just described life, get back on the bus!"

They think they are missing something. He's cheating you out of life... How easily young people distrust their parents. How easily a young man or young woman distrusts their God.

**2) He thought that money would bring him happiness.** Wealth is not bad. It's not wealth that is wrong here – it's the attitude toward wealth. **1 Timothy 6** says that the **"Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil"**.

You don't have to be rich to fall into this danger!  
Money in itself is not evil. It's the love of money. Money is like a brick. You can use it to build a cathedral or to crush someone's skull. Money is neither good nor evil in itself. It is greed that is the root of all evil.

Wealth can be seductive and alluring. He heard the promises and swallowed the bait. You have heard the same promises - get them in the mail all the time.

Sign up for this credit card and you will receive free airline tickets and because it is a "Titanium" card people will know you have arrived! Several things are wrong with this picture. First of all the tickets aren't really free and you can't use them except on Monday's and Thursday's of the second week in October and then only to Los Angeles and who wants to go there? We're already here!

Second, the card is not titanium - it's plastic. Finally, arrived? Where? More debt? It has a thousand lines filled with promises..

It whispers softly in the innermost thoughts... true happiness... real friends... acceptance by everyone... true love... lasting romance... It lies!

When the money ran out - so did his "friends". Money does not satisfy.

Do money and social position really satisfy? Just read the tragic account of Christina Onassis who died at age 37. Commenting on her life, her stepsister Henrietta Gelber said, "She was one of those people who would never be happy." "She would become impatient. It had all come too easily -- all the money, houses all over the world, few real responsibilities." "She lacked a sense of achievement," says Gelber. "What she was striving for was virtually impossible in her situation. She had houses all over the world, but she never really had a home." --People Magazine

**3) He thought that he was in control.** But he wasn't - there was a famine and he couldn't change anything! He went from the pleasure palace to the pigpen ...From eating beef at the Outback Steakhouse to eating pods at the pork-house outback.

A lot of people - not just young people either! - don't remember or won't remember the lessons of life.

Some people think that the stock market can only go up!

They have never experienced a "bear" market that lasted longer than a month or two!

They have never seen a depression or even a recession, lines of cars at gas stations or the pressure of inflation. They don't know what a wage or price freeze is and they don't

remember having to turn down the thermostat to conserve energy. Some people think that it can't happen to them.

It is only other people that experience car accidents, tornados, mud slides, or earth quakes. Their house never burns up in fire or even loses a shingle in a wind storm - and if it does - they have insurance!

A lot of people think that they are in control. Listen - Life bites. You can't stop it, manage it, or even control the bleeding. You aren't in control - you're just hanging on!

This wild young man **took three critical steps** in his behavior.

**1) He looked at his situation with critical honesty.** From wild living to starvation was a shock to his system. That which is sweet in the mouth turns to bile in the throat. That which is light on the tongue sits heavy on the stomach. This young man saw with brutal clarity how badly he had blundered in life

It took him a while to hit "bottom" but he hit it and hit it hard.. For some people it comes hard. For some it never comes. Some people will never admit the emptiness of their selfish lives.

**2) He determined a course of action.** He remembered how good the hired men had it at home. He remembered the tired satisfaction at the end of a hard day's work. He remembered the good solid sleep of the bone weary and dog tired farm hand. He remembered how much they had to eat and how much they ate!

He decided that he could go home, beg forgiveness and ask for a job. We can see the change in this young man in what he decides to ask for. He doesn't decide to go back and get his old room. He decides to go back for a job. We see a change in attitude that lies beneath the change in direction.

There is a word for this: **It's called "repentance"**. Bob Hargrave, a professor of mine said that repentance "is a change in attitude that leads to change in living".

**3) He took the course of action determined.** It is said that the road to hell is paved with "good intentions". Many people intend to get straight with God -eventually - and never do. There are as many different reasons as there are people. Pride is just one of the most popular.

A rich man I knew in Santa Monica, was lying on his easy-boy chair, struggling with disease and bleeding from his rectum. He said to me, "I'll accept the Lord when I get this under control." He died two weeks later and the last time he was in church it was in a coffin.

This wild young man was saved... He was saved from sin

I remember a couple who came to church for a time. I went to their home and talked to them about the church, they asked the question. "What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what?"

The results of sin (rebellion and distrust) are the loss of life! The sickness of soul that

weighs down every buoyant thought. The sadness that fills a person's heart and extinguishes joy in their eyes.

The selfishness that leaves a path of broken lives behind. He was saved from a lifetime of regret.

There is no joy in a pigpen no matter how many pods there are! Pigpens come in different shapes and sizes.

Some have three car garages and brand new countertops in the kitchen. Some have vomit in the corner of the bathroom. Some have leather seats and little windshield wipers on the headlights. Some are small apartments with leftover furniture from the divorce.

They all smell the same.

He was saved to a place called home. There is nothing like coming home. It is not the place. It is the people.

He was Forgiven! He was welcome! He was Home!