

“How & Why We ALL Cry Out”

Psalm 119:146

September 4, 2022

INTRO: *Have you ever “found yourself” in the Bible?*

- Pastor Fredrick... Brock & Griffin... Joshua & Caleb
- Mike & Doranne... Pricilla & Aquila
- Me... **Rich young ruler**; Blind-man in John 9; Titus (2X)
- **All of us**... John 17 ... & I pray: Matthew 28 & Acts 1:8-9

T/S: *Today I hope to help you to see & find yourself in one of the most well known parables from all of Christ’s teachings...*

I pray to help us **ALL** cry out to Christ so that **ALL** of us will be better able to **“BE Psalm 119:146”** and better love & obey the LORD our God!

BIG IDEA: *We ALL need The Gospel’s loving truth, testing, & timelessness!*

TEXT: Psalm 119:146

*I cried out whole-heartedly, Hear me! O LORD,
I will keep/obey Your statutes/(Word, will, & ways).
**I cried to You; save/rescue me!, that I may
observe/obey your Word/testimonies.***

CONTEXT:

- Psalms... Series... Structure... & Savior!
- Creator... Christ... & Christ-likeness

PREVIEW: *With our Head, Heart, & Hands...*

1. We **ALL** need to **REALIZE**
2. We **ALL** need to **RESPOND**
3. We **ALL** need to **REPENT**
4. We **ALL** need to **REMEMBER**
5. We **ALL** need to **REPEAT**

I. We **ALL** Need To **REALIZE**

Psalm 119:146

*I cried out whole-heartedly, Hear me! O LORD,
I will keep/obey Your statutes/(Word, will, & ways).
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grace **GRACE** grace
respond **REPENT** repeat

VIDEO #1 “Washer: Are You Really A Christian?”

II. We ALL Need To RESPOND

- Listen to this passage & find yourself in it...
- FYI... we are ALL in this passage!

VIDEO #2 *“The Prodigal – Luke 15:11-32”*

Do you see yourself in the younger brother, the older brother, (a 3rd sibling that would fall in-between), or with the peculiar father in the family?

III. We ALL Need To REPENT

A. Let's look at the younger brother:

a. Key CONTEXT

- i. Parables typically make a single POINT
- ii. Hearers would be OUTRAGED
- iii. Son wishes father DEAD... wants WORLD

b. Key WORDS

- i. *“estate”*
- ii. *“pigs”*
- iii. *“came to himself”*
- iv. *“I perish here with hunger”*
- v. *“treat me... like a hired servant”*

c. Key RESPONSE = **GENUINE REPENTENCE**

B. Let's look at the Father:

a. Key CONTEXT:

- i. He is the standard of holiness here...
- ii. His actions are deemed outrageous...
- iii. He is beyond counter-cultural...
- iv. His love will challenge & convict us ALL!

b. Key WORDS:

- i. *Estate* (*bios = life*)
- ii. *Ran*
- iii. *Compassion: hugs... kisses...*
- iv. *Family "ring"*

c. Key RESPONSE:

- i. First, he gives his son over to his desires...
- ii. Doesn't chase him to the pig-pen
- iii. ...Yet he runs to his returning son...
- iv. Runs, hugs, kisses, son with compassion
- v. **FULLY restores** repentant/returning son

VIDEO #3 *"The Father's Heart"*

We ALL need to realize & reflect
the father's heart!

VIDEO #4 *"The Father's Hands"*

We ALL need to realize & reflect the father's
passion for forgiveness & restoration!

IV. We **ALL** Need To **REMEMBER**

A. Let's look at the **older brother**:

a. Key CONTEXT:

- i. **Luke 15:1-3** set up *the bullseye*
- ii. 3rd of 3 parables = **THE POINT!**
- iii. Immediate contrast to the father
- iv. Reveals hatred for both father & brother
- v. Hard-hearted w/ roots of sin & bitterness
- vi. Very worldly; wrapped in works/legalism

b. Key WORDS:

- i. *"Look" (vs. "father")*
- ii. *"slaving away" & "never disobeyed you"*
- iii. *"didn't even give me a goat/party"*
- iv. *"would not come in"*

VIDEO #5 *"The Older Brother"*

c. Key RESPONSE:

- i. Opposite of the father/Father!
- ii. Stubborn & sinful self-absorption...
- iii. Self-righteous, unforgiving condemnation

B. Let's look at **ourselves**:

a. Our CONTEXT:

- i. World, Flesh, & Devil (*spiritual warfare!*)
- ii. God's Word, God's will, God's ways
- iii. Head, Heart, Hands
- iv. Locally, Regionally, Globally

v. **Hebrews:**

1. Drift
2. Disconnect
3. Dilly-dally
4. Disobey
5. Deny & Defy

b. Our WORDS:

i. Lying lip-service?

1. As a younger-brother type...
 - a. ***No true change of heart***
 - b. ***No true biblical repentance***
2. As an older-brother type...
 - a. ***Cold & cruel legal-moralism***
 - b. ***No true biblical repentance***

VIDEO #6 “My Uncomfortable Question”

ii. Loving life-service?

1. Great Commandments

Love God, Love People, Serve the World!

2. Great Commission

Find the Lost, Grow the Found!

c. Our RESPONSE: *(we're ALL like both brothers)*

- i. **ALL-in or ALL-out** (cf. John 3:3,16,36)
- ii. *ALL-in equates to our missional manifesto*



One FAITH. One FAMILY. One FOCUS.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally).” – Acts 1:8

One Question: *WHAT DO YOU WANT?*

One Offer: *COME AND SEE.*

One Promise: *TRUTH IN LOVE!*

Our Truth-in-Love Distinctives: We are...

- 1.** Responding to grace & repenting of sin...
- 2.** Trusting the Bible & obeying God's Word...
- 3.** Growing in-Christ & living Spirit-led...
- 4.** Praying for guidance & following by faith...
- 5.** Dying to self & carrying our cross...
- 6.** BE-ing the Church & loving one another...(*truly loving* one another)
- 7.** Equipping the saints & exemplifying supernatural unity...
- 8.** Ministering as ambassadors & discerning matters shrewdly...
- 9.** Worshipping God vertically & experiencing Him horizontally...
- 10.** Proclaiming the Gospel (*no matter what*) & fishing for men...
- 11.** Making discipled-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

V. We **ALL** Need To **REPEAT**

- A. *Don't confuse your past & your present!* - JDP
 - a. *Having heard is NOT hearing...*
 - b. *Old obedience does not prevent new disobedience.*
 - c. *Previous innocence is NOT present innocence.*
 - d. *Humility has a very short shelf-life.*
 - e. *Having LOVED (before) is NOT LOVING (now).*
 - f. *Forgave is NOT the same as forgiving.*

- B. *The Gospel will swallow up a mountain of repented sins... but it will not sweep a single speck of sinful dirt under the rug.* - JDP

- C. *There are no two greater opposites or opposing forces in this world than love & lies.* - JDP

- D. *Biblical bitterness has vertical roots & horizontal fruits.*
- JDP

- E. *Biblical forgiveness is The Gospel applied horizontally.* - JDP

- F. *Christ is the only difference between conviction & condemnation.* - JDP

- G. *The fact that you've been wronged does not protect you from being wrong... In reality, it raises your risks of wrong doing in response – resulting in a range of sinful attitudes & actions, from revenge to running away.* - JDP

- H. *There is no delays with divine deliverance. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)*
- JDP
- I. *The father never brought the party to the pig-pen... nor the porch.* - JDP
- J. *Polish does not protect against poisonous porches.* - JDP
- K. *The Gospel is an INVITATION not an adaptation.* - JDP
- L. *We ALL need to obey if we hope to abide... and we all need to abide if we hope to obey.* - JDP
- M. *Biblical older brothers “scatter” cultural younger brothers.* - JDP
- N. *Biblical, faithful-obedience is everyone’s bullseye... the only difference between us is where we all start from.* - JDP

CLOSE:

Truth in Love is ALWAYS to be ALL of our contexts...

- A. Younger brothers PERVERT it
- B. Older brothers POISON it
- C. The Father can & will PURIFY it

Let's PRAY!

WORSHIP: “Come To The Table”

3 Reasons the Parable of the Prodigal Son Isn't What You Think

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In November of 2000, director M. Night Shyamalan followed up his crowd-pleasing *The Sixth Sense* with another slow-burn thriller. In the opening scene of *Unbreakable*, protagonist David Dunn survives a horrible accident, propelling him to investigate how and why he survived. The true nature of Dunn's discovery reveals to the audience that, whereas they thought they were watching just another thriller, they were actually watching another genre altogether. Even with the foreshadowing of the film's opening slate, the genre-bending proved an unexpected surprise.

Similarly, for many who hear or read the parable of the prodigal son (as it is commonly called), they interpret it, understandably so, as the story about a reckless and immoral individual who repents of his sin. But there's more to this parable than the simple (albeit, accurate!) fact of God's love for the rebelliously wayward. Even with the catalyst for the parable laid out at the beginning of the chapter, the direction Jesus takes his narrative doesn't follow our expectations.

It's not that this parable has a hidden meaning so much as a multi-layered meaning. The surface-level interpretation is easily discerned, but there's more to the story than that. As such, there are three contextual keys to understanding the parable's core message.

1. Jesus Has a Specific Audience in Mind

One of the benefits of subheadings in our Bibles is that we can more easily locate particular passages. One of the downsides of these subheadings is that we can read certain sections of Scripture as isolated passages, when that is often not the case. With the parable of the [prodigal son](#) in particular (which starts in [Luke 15:11](#)), the Bible sets the stage several verses earlier.

As miscreants and publicans crowd around Jesus, the Pharisees mutter the following complaint: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" ([Luke 15:2](#)). This statement includes an implicit accusation—i.e., that Jesus shouldn't be hanging around such riffraff. It's an accusation that deserves an answer, and Jesus is up to the challenge.

He begins his response by telling a parable about a shepherd who leaves his 99 sheep to find the one that is lost. The shepherd utters the last spoken words in this parable: "I have found my lost sheep" (v. 6).

Just one parable, however, isn't sufficient for Jesus's purposes; he goes straight into a second parable. This one is about a woman who expends all her energy to find one lost coin. The woman utters the last words spoken in this parable: "I have found my lost coin" (v. 9).

Even *two* parables aren't sufficient. Jesus transitions immediately into a third, and longer, parable about a father who welcomes back his prodigal son with lavish grace. The father utters the last words spoken in this story: "[my son] was lost and is found" (v. 32).

These three parables provide a lengthy response to the complaint that Jesus indiscriminately welcomes sinners. In fact, these three parables represent the one time in the book of Luke where Jesus spends an entire chapter addressing only one topic. Evidently, the answer he has for the Pharisees is an important one, worthy of emphasis.

The first and most obvious point of these parables is similar to what Jesus had told the Pharisees earlier: "I have not come to call the [righteous](#), but sinners to repentance" ([Luke 5:32](#)). But there's another and more direct message Jesus has for the Pharisees. **His ultimate point is not to address what they consider a problem, but rather to address a problem they completely fail to recognize.**



2. The Scene with the Older Brother Is the Climax, Not an Afterthought

You may notice that the parable of the [prodigal son](#) ends differently than the previous two parables do. After the wayward son has returned and been reconciled to his father, there's an additional scene: the older brother refuses to celebrate, choosing instead to criticize his father's willingness to, in the words of the Pharisees, "welcome sinners." The father pleads with his son to change his perspective, and then the parable ends. We never learn if the eldest son is reconciled to his family or not.

The reason for this "extra" scene is that [Jesus](#) is directing his attention back onto the Pharisees themselves. He explains the error of their ways by putting them into the third parable; they are represented by the firstborn son, and his words reflect their hearts. Listen to the older son's self-evaluation: "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders" (v. 29). This is the self-evaluation implicit in the Pharisees' posturing. They see themselves as obedient to the will and ways of God—unlike the tax collectors and sinners.

But the way the oldest son relates to his father reveals how the Pharisees—and, by extension, all legalists—relate to God. The son says he's spent years "slaving for" his father. He categorizes their relationship, not with paternal or familial terms, but with the imagery of slavery. He is a bondservant and his father is a taskmaster. He sees himself earning the right to his father's good graces through his slavish obedience.

This posturing can keep a soul out of heaven just as much as licentious living can. It's the same posture taken by the rich young ruler who asked Jesus, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" ([Matthew 19:16](#)). For the legalist, life comes through being—

or doing—good. If we're honest, we all succumb to legalistic thinking to one degree or another.

And thus, to one degree or another, we all need to hear Christ's plea to the Pharisees through the parable of the prodigal son, which leads to our third point.

3. Christ's Appeal Is to Wayward Rule-Followers, Not Wayward Rule-Breakers

Like the Pharisees, or the older son in the parable, the legalist might appear obedient to God, but as [theologian Thomas Chalmers points out](#), under the surface of legalistic pursuits lies an evil root:

On the tenure of "Do this and live" . . . the creature[,] striving to be square and even with his Creator, is, in fact, pursuing all the while his own selfishness, instead of God's glory; and with all the conformities which he labours [sic] to accomplish, the soul of obedience is not there. (10)

In such a case, the *appearance* of obedience is present, but not the *soul* of obedience. Through outward conformity, the legalist pursues God on his own terms. He may do many of the right things, but for the wrong reasons. He chooses a transactional arrangement with God based on works, rather than a relationship with God based on undeserved favor. Since God refuses to honor the legalist's terms, the legalist is in a constant state of inner agitation. Because he seeks the rewards of merit, he misunderstands, and sometimes even loathes, the rewards of grace—especially when those rewards are bestowed on those the legalist deems unworthy.

It is ultimately this legalism that [Jesus](#) unpacks and addresses in the climax of his third parable in [Luke 15](#). And how does the father in Jesus's parable respond to his legalistic son? "My son," he says, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours" (v. 31).

It is almost as if Jesus is pleading to the Pharisees through the father: "Stop acting like you have to earn what God has, or that his pleasure is contingent on your performance. Accept your sonship without merit or effort. Rejoice in the reality that everything God has can be yours—not because you don't have a wayward heart (you do!), but because his inheritance is given freely, not earned."



One Coin, Two Faces

We don't tend to think of rule-following as a possible expression of a wayward heart. The elder son in the parable certainly doesn't. The Pharisees certainly don't. But slavery to sin isn't just experienced through licentious living; it's also experienced through legalistic living. After all, it isn't freedom to seek merit before God based on your performance. Such a goal is both impossible and anti-Christ at its core. In spite of its pious appearance, legalism is slavery to sin.

What many fail to realize is that legalism and licentiousness are two sides of the same coin. Both represent a rejection of God's rule. Both despise God's mercy in favor of an ostensibly better way. Both are expressions of a wayward heart.

In [Luke 15](#), [Jesus](#) reminds us that he came to save *all* slaves of sin—regardless of what we look like on the outside.

The Forgiving Father

What we typically call the parable of the [prodigal son](#) is really a parable about a loving father who offers reconciliation to a licentious son *and* a legalistic son. Both of his sons are lost—like the lost sheep or the lost coin. Both are sinners in desperate need of mercy. The one who acknowledges his need for mercy (like the younger son) is in a good place. The one who fails to even see his need for mercy (like the older son) is in serious—and even eternal—danger. God calls such a person to repentance, to take on the mantle of sonship, and to accept God's terms of forgiveness and grace.

We all need rescuing—both the law keeper and lawbreaker. What the Pharisees considered bad news is actually good news: Jesus welcomes sinners. Let us not begrudge Christ's heart for sinners, for that means he has a heart for us.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

[Luke 15:11–32](#)

[LUKE 15:11–32](#)

"He said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found' " (vv. 56–58).

Without a doubt, the parable of the prodigal son ranks among the most memorable and powerful stories that Jesus ever told. In it, we learn much about the character of God and the attitude that we are to have toward other forgiven sinners. Yet, as it is part of a set of parables that Jesus tells in response to a particular situation, we must first look briefly at the context if we are to understand it properly.

Our Lord was motivated to tell this parable after He heard some Pharisees and scribes grumbling about His eating with "sinners" ([Luke 15:1–2](#)). Remember that the religious leaders of Jesus' day, while they might have acknowledged that they sinned from time to time, did not view themselves as "sinners." That was a category that applied to those who were "worse" than they were—tax collectors, prostitutes, and others. These sinners, thought the Pharisees and scribes, were beyond the reach of God's grace. They were so corrupt that no truly holy person could eat with them and escape defilement.

Of course, passages such as [Matthew 23](#) indicate that the views of the Pharisees about their own holiness were sorely mistaken. But the fact that these individuals were also sinners is not the point in the parable of the prodigal son. Instead, their understanding that the most notorious sinners could never find a restored relationship with God comes under criticism. The parables of the lost sheep and the

lost coin, which precede the parable of the prodigal son, point us toward seeing that heaven takes great joy in extending grace to the worst of sinners. When that which was lost has been found, a celebration follows, and this is particularly true when lost men and women, who as divine image-bearers are the most valuable beings God has created, receive the Lord's grace and return to Him ([Luke 15:3–10](#)).

The Pharisees and the scribes are represented in the parable of the prodigal son by the older brother, who is resentful at his father's embrace of his sinful sibling (vv. 28–29). How could his father welcome back this son who squandered his father's gifts in riotous living and great sin? But such a viewpoint shows the failure of the older boy to understand God's attitude toward fallen people, and thus it shows how wrong the Pharisees and scribes were to cast aspersions on Jesus' dining with sinners. The Lord rejoices whenever a sinner turns from His wicked ways and returns to Him. Let us also rejoice.

Coram Deo

If we are not careful, we may adopt a holier-than-thou attitude just like the one that the Prodigal Son's brother possessed. We dare not close the doors of our churches to the most notorious sinners. If they have repented and turned to Christ, we must likewise embrace them. If we do not, then we likely have not understood our own unworthiness and the lavish gift of grace God has given to us.

Your Sins I Will Remember No More

[Hebrews 8:12](#) ESV / 121 helpful votes

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”

[Isaiah 43:25](#) ESV / 118 helpful votes

“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

[Hebrews 10:17](#) ESV / 108 helpful votes

Then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

[1 John 1:9](#) ESV / 100 helpful votes

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[Psalms 103:12](#) ESV / 88 helpful votes

As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[Jeremiah 31:34](#) ESV / 86 helpful votes

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

[Isaiah 1:18](#) ESV / 65 helpful votes

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

[Acts 3:19](#) ESV / 54 helpful votes

Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out,

[Micah 7:19](#) ESV / 46 helpful votes

He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

[Ephesians 4:32](#) ESV / 39 helpful votes

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#) ESV / 39 helpful votes

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

[Romans 8:1](#) ESV / 38 helpful votes

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[Ephesians 1:7](#) ESV / 35 helpful votes

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,