

**The Gospel of Luke / Lesson 20**  
**The Prodigal Son**

**Luke 15:11-32**

### **For Servants,**

- Please review the introduction to the Book of Luke and pick some information to focus on.
- It is advisable to have the children take turns in reading the verses so that they get engaged and pay attention. Upon the servant prep. Servant may elect to summarize some verses into a story instead of reading verse by verse based on the age of the children. You can simplify according to the age.

### **MEMORY VERSE**

#### **LUKE 15:24**

**"For this my son was dead and is alive again; He was lost and is found"**

#### **The Repentance Game**

Tape two cards on opposite walls of your classroom. Write SIN on one and REPENTANCE on the other. Tell your class that you are going to read several phrases. Instruct them to match the sentence with the sign that best describes the attitude of the phrase.

Read the following:

- 1) Yelling at others
- 2) Take something that does not belong to me
- 3) Not obeying my parents
- 4) Confession with Abouna.
- 5) Prayer asking God to forgive me
- 6) May I please have another chance?
- 7) Not reading bible and ignoring God's Commandments
- 8) Lying
- 9) I hope I never hurt your feelings again, I'm sorry.

Explain to your class that repentance is turning away from our sin. Today we will hear a story about sin and repentance and how God responds to our repentance.

## LESSON TIME!

### **Lesson Goal:** God is a loving Father

Jesus tells a wonderful parable in today's Bible reading. This parable is often called the Prodigal Son or "Parable of the Lost Son," but a better title would be the "Parable of the Loving Father." It shows that **God is a loving Father**.

**Note to the Servant:** Using a chalk or dry erase board draw a vertical line down the center, writing "God, Our Father" on one side and "Father of the Prodigal Son" on the other side. As you go through the lesson, have the children list the characteristics of the prodigal son's father. Then rewrite them under the "God, our Father" heading, explaining to the class that the father in today's lesson is a picture or type of our Heavenly Father, demonstrating his love and forgiveness.

Jesus told this parable to give His disciples and us a picture of God fatherly heart. Listen closely and hear about how much God loves us. **God is a loving Father**. Remember He told us when we pray to say: our Father who arts in heaven.....

## Luke 15:11-13

**11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. .**

Right from the start, this parable shows us that God does not focus on the son's sin. Instead, He focuses on the son. In verse 11, Jesus is acknowledging that the father is the owner and primary source of all things. The son says two little words that really give away where his heart is. Does anyone see two words in verse 12 that show the son's heart?

He says, "Give me." This tells us that he made his decision out of his own selfish heart. "Give me" is what this son chose to live by. He gets as far as he can from the influence of his father by saying, "I want what you can give me, but I don't want you. I want your presents, but I don't want your presence." People often have that attitude toward God. "I want God's blessing, but I don't want God's presence in my life."

It goes on to tell us that the son wanted all the inheritance his father had for him. So, the father gave him his request, and as soon as he received his inheritance, he left the father and wasted his inheritance on prodigal or wasteful living. "Wasted" is a sad

word. We can't waste our life being away from Jesus; He is our beloved father who loves us and care for us.

## Luke 15:14-16

**14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.**

He spent every last penny and ended up with nothing to show for it. Even his so-called "friends" left him when the money ran out. They liked him when he had money to spend on them, but when the money disappeared, they did too. He began to be in want. A severe famine came. **What is a famine?** (Not enough food to feed the people.) The only job he could get was a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry and poor that he would have gladly eaten the pig's food.

The Prodigal son decided to be away from his father [God] and spend his time only with friends. He took what was his father's and spent on his friends; Us too we need to stay close to God; pray and love God, love his church, and when we spend time with our friends or family, we also remember that God is with us and never stay away from God; **God is a loving Father.**

### **Activity: Visual Aid: Pig Slop**

Save some leftovers from home that are not too gross in a container and bring them to class. In a matching container put a small prize like a pencil, eraser or stickers, etc.

One by one, let each child look into each container. Have them be quiet with any comments about their contents.

When each child has seen the contents of both containers, ask for a vote of which they would like to have. Allow each child to pick out a small prize. Reaffirm the point that if the prodigal son stayed with his father and made the right choice, He would not have had to be eating food that was fit for the animals.

No one even noticed or cared about this prodigal son. No one offered to feed him or help him. He was all alone. He had once been rich, but now he was poor. He could have stayed in his father's presence and enjoyed him.

## Luke 15:17-19

**17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."**

These are wonderful verses! We see **the heart of the son change**. The Bible says that he "came to himself." It was kind of like he woke up and came to his senses. He realized something very important: he was guilty of sinning against his father. It is the same realization we all should come to when our hearts cry out "God, I'm guilty. Please forgive me". Just like the son, we are unworthy of God's forgiveness, but by grace, He promises to forgive us if we come to Him.

We see the son start to choose the right thing in verse 18. He does three things: "arise," "go" and "say." These words show us his repentance. He stands up, leaves for home, and hopes his father will let him stay. That is what repentance is for us too. It is when we agree with God about our sin and ourselves. It is saying "I was wrong and You are right, Lord."

Another way of looking at repentance is that it is a change of direction. It is when we have a change of mind and a change of heart about sin. Then that change in our heart produces a change in our actions. It is like going in a certain direction, our own way, realizing it, and making a U-turn never to go that old direction again.

That is why; in our Coptic church; we go confess our sins with Abouna to God and receive the absolution.

Then the son says, "Make me." Those are beautiful words! They are words that show that his cry has changed from "give me" to "make me." He is showing his desire to come under the authority of his father and leave self behind. Jesus wants us to look at our own hearts and ask, "Am I saying, 'give me' to God, or is my response 'make me?'" "Give me" shows we only want to live for self, and we will end up being in want. Our prayer can be like the prodigal son's, "Lord I want you to make me, to mold me." That is a beautiful prayer. Have you prayed that?

## **Luke 15:20-24**

**20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'**

**22 "But the father said to his servants, bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.**

What an incredible passage of scripture! Remember that the heart of this earthly father is a picture for us of the heart of our Heavenly Father, God. **God is a loving Father.**

This shows God's response to true repentance. God always receives our repentance. **God is a loving Father.** This is the only place in Scripture we see God run. When we truly repent and turn our hearts toward God and say, "make me into what you want me to be." It is when we leave the "give me's" behind, confessing our sin (like the son in verse 21), that God receives us as Jesus pictures for us here in verse 20.

What does it say the father did? The father had lovingly and longingly been waiting for his son. He had been watching for him all this time. God waits and watches for us while we are separated from Him. Remember it is only our sin that keeps us from Him.

When we come to Him in true repentance, He sees us and has compassion on us (that means His heart goes out and embraces us), and He runs to us with hugs and kisses. What great love! No matter what our sin has been, when we truly repent, God our Father receives us this loving way. He will completely forgive us and remember our sins no more. **God is a loving Father.**

What a wonderful Father we have. He does not condemn us or tell us how wrong we have been. He restores us as His children. Verse 24 says, "...for this is my son." What priceless words for a father to say to a child! He is going to celebrate because this is his son, restored to him! Our Heavenly Father loves us very much and wants us to come to Him no matter what we may have done. It is this great love that God has towards us that makes us desire to serve Him with all of our hearts. **God is a loving Father.**

### **Luke 15:25-32**

**25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'**

**28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'**

**31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "**

Here we see the other brother. This can be a picture of some of us too. He seems outwardly opposite from the brother who left, yet just like his brother, he has a wasted life because of self-righteousness and pride. He wanted his brother to be reminded of his sin; he did not think there should be a celebration. He did not want grace extended to his brother. He thought his brother should be punished. This brother had stayed and been committed to his father's house, but he was a million miles away

from his father's heart.

Verse 28 tells us this older brother exploded in anger. The right response would have been for him to join in the celebration of his brother's return. Instead, he isolates himself in pride and creates a scene to disrupt the celebration. He was saying, "It doesn't seem to pay to do right." But here we see God's heart again. It says the father came out and pleaded with him, calling him son and reminding him that he was always with him and all that the father had was this son's.

What a loving heart God has to all kinds of prodigals. **God is a loving Father**. He lets us know that the blessing of obedience is having the Father's presence in our lives. There is no greater blessing than living in fellowship with our loving Father. Who would want to trade that for self and sin? Sometimes we do choose our own way, but when we truly turn back to the father and say, "I have sinned. You are right," what will be His response to us? Remember **God is a loving Father**.

### **Activity:**

#### **Mean or loving Game?**

Tape two square areas in your classroom. Label one "mean" and the other "loving." Have the children stand in the appropriate square in response to several phrases you read to them.

Read the following:

- 1) A girl asked her father for a lunch, and as a joke, he gave her a paper bag with a stone in it.
- 2) A boy fell at school and got his clothes muddy; so, his Mom brought him some clean clothes.
- 3) A girl broke her mother's favorite bowl by accident and her mother said, "It's OK honey, we all make mistakes."
- 4) A boy wanted to go swimming without supervision and his Dad said, "No."
- 5) A mommy let her baby play with dangerous toys because he wanted to.

Explain that a loving parent does not always give us what we want, but they always look out for our best interest.

### **Simple Summary of the story:**

There was a father who had two sons. The younger son asked his father to sell his things and give him the money. The son wanted to leave his family and do whatever he wanted. This made his father sad, but he gave the son his things. The son spent all the money. But then he was hungry. He found a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry. He wanted to eat the pig's food. He thought, I am going to go back to my father and say sorry. I will ask him if I can be his servant. When his father saw him, he was delighted. He ran to his son and welcomed him back into the family. He threw a party to celebrate his son was alive and back home. Jesus said, "There is great rejoicing in heaven when people return to God."

### **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of Thanksgiving to our loving Heavenly Father asking Him to accept our repentance and forgive us, telling Jesus that we love Him.

### **Review Questions**

1) Who asked the father for his share of his estate?

The younger son / The older son / A servant

2) Where did the younger son go?

A nearby village / A distant land / Stayed at home

3) What did the younger son do with the money?

He invested it wisely / He gave it to the poor / He wasted it on wild living

4) The younger son found a job feeding which animal?

Pigs / Sheep / Cows

5) How did the father react when the younger son returned home?

He didn't want to speak to him / He gave him a job as a servant / He welcomed him as a son

6) Which items did the father give to the younger son?

A ring / A glove / A robe / A hat / Sandals / A bag

7) How did the older brother feel when his brother returned?

Happy / Angry / loving

## **Email to Parents;**

Dear Parents,

This week we learned about The Prodigal Son. The theme was "God is a loving Father." We learn so much from this parable that Jesus told. One of the greatest things we see is God's heart towards us. He is our heavenly Father and this story speaks so much about our relationship with Him. No matter what we may have done, the Father loves us very much and is willing to forgive.

we looked at different aspects of this parable. We looked at the father, the lost son and his brother; and learn valuable things from all of them. Our prayer is that the Lord will teach us all more and more from His wonderful word this week.

The section of scripture that we studied was Luke 15:11-32. Please read it again with your children and discuss with them what they have learned.