



EASTER 2018

The Prodigal
Shane Philip
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Discussion Notes

The Crossing church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we celebrate Easter, the time when our Savior, Jesus Christ, defeated Satan at the Cross and was resurrected from the dead. No other religion or cult can say this about their god. We have become heirs to our Father because He provided a way back to Himself through the death, resurrection and ascension of His Son through whom we have forgiveness of sin. This is a time of remembering, reflection and gratitude for all that He has done for us. Easter is for every prodigal as Jesus' resurrection brings hope to all of us.

Question: What would you say to Jesus today about Easter if He knocked at your door and you invited Him in?

SCRIPTURE¹

Luke 15:11-24 Jesus continued, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them." Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' " So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate.

1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Ephesians 1:19-20a (NLT) I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.

Philippians 3:10a I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection.

OBSERVATION

The son in this story demanded his share of the father's estate as if his father were dying. The father agreed and this amounted to one-third of the father's estate which he selfishly took away with him to a gentile country and there squandered it all on worldly pleasures. When it was all gone, he was destitute, starving and driven to caring for pigs and eating their food. To make it worse, pigs were unclean animals according to the Jews because of their cloven hooves. The son's circumstances were dire and he asked himself how he could have put himself in this position. He thought of home and, knowing he was an

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated



unworthy son, planned to ask his father's forgiveness and work as a hired hand to gain his father's favor again. He didn't realize that his father's forgiveness was a free gift.

Question: When were you a prodigal child who rebelled against your parents? What were the circumstances? How did they welcome you home?

Question: When did you rebel against God? What were your reasons? How did you find your way back to Him? Are you in rebellion today?

Question: What do you think the older brother felt about his sibling's rebellion and redemption? What did he think about his father's welcoming him home? Whose reaction displeased God? Why?

APPLICATION

This Easter metaphor of a rebellious son and a forgiving father illustrates our stories of rebellion against God, His forgiveness and our redemption. All of us who have given our lives to Jesus have experienced being made whole again despite our terrible sin. Returning home, the son's condition was not unlike our own when we finally came to our senses and grieved over our own rebellion. Many people in our community were waiting also for our return, and their motives were to spurn us and ridicule us for our sinfulness. They didn't break pottery as in the Jewish Kezazah ceremony, but they broke our hearts with their rejection. We deserved shame, ridicule, shunning, embarrassment, disgust, anger, and humiliation, but from our Father, we got love and compassion instead. Jesus took our humiliation and shame on Himself as He went to the Cross of shame for our redemption. No blame, no condemnation, just unconditional love.

Question: How did God welcome you back? Did He come running toward you with arms open and compassion? What did you experience as your sins were swept away by His forgiveness and your new life?

Question: What is the condition your family today? Do you have a prodigal child? What are you doing in the current space of time before he/she comes home?

Jesus didn't come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people alive through His enormous power. He defeated death through crucifixion and resurrection and this is why we celebrate Easter. We have inherited His power to be used for His purposes. We have a new birth and a new hope. When God said "It is finished!" He meant it. God doesn't have broken pottery awaiting us, He has new clay as He molds us into Jesus' likeness.

Question: What has happened to you since God saved you out of your sin? How is your life better?

Question: Baptism is a demonstration of own death and resurrection through the sacrifice and redemptive power of Jesus. How do you talk to your children about being baptized? What do you think Jesus would say to them when explaining its purpose and meaning?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we have all been prodigals before giving our lives to You. You welcomed us in as any loving father would do, but you also sacrificed Yourself for us and died in our place. We are full of gratitude for this and we are in awe of Your resurrection power which gives us hope and new life. In Jesus' name. Amen.