

Week 9 – Parables of Lostness (Review)

Day 1: Ears To Hear

Read Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 6:8-10, Jeremiah 25:4-5, Luke 14:34-35

1. What did you learn from the teaching last night (if you didn't hear the message, listen to it online at trinitygrace.org)?

2. Just before these parables Jesus said, as He often did, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” What did He mean by this? Why is the action (and the sense) of hearing the Word so important?

3. Who gives us ears to hear the Word of God? Pray that God would continue to open your ears to His Word.

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.” - Matthew 13:16

Day 2: Prelude

Read Luke 15:1-10, Matthew 18:10-14

The majority of our attention will be given to the Parable of the Prodigal Son this week, however today we will focus on the two preceding parables. They serve as a prelude to the Prodigal Son, yet they should not be overlooked.

1. For the Parable of the Lost Sheep, what are the differences between the versions in Luke and Matthew? Is each version used to make different points? Explain.

2. What is taught about the character of God in the Parable of the Lost Coin?

3. Notice the numbers in these parables: 100 sheep, 10 coins, 2 sons. Do you see how the focus is being narrowed to the climax of the Prodigal Son by the movement of the numbers? How else do these parables lead up to and serve as a prelude to the Parable of the Prodigal Son?

Day 3: Jonah

Read the book of Jonah

1. Why did Jonah flee from God? What does this reveal about Jonah's attitude?
2. To what extent did God desire that the people of Nineveh would hear the Word of the Lord? To what extent was God determined to use Jonah for this purpose (i.e. why didn't God have someone else preach to Nineveh once Jonah ran away)?
3. Keeping in mind your answers to the first two questions, what is the main point of the story of Jonah?
4. Relate Jonah to the older brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. How are they similar? How is Jonah similar to the Pharisees and scribes (refer back to Luke 15:1-2)?

Day 4: The Prodigal Son

Read Luke 15:11-32

“There are two ways to be your own Savior and Lord. One is by breaking all the moral laws and setting your own course, and one is by keeping all the moral laws and being very, very good.”

The Prodigal God
Tim Keller

1. How are the two sons' sin similar? How is the elder brother just as lost as the younger brother once was?
2. In the same way that the parables divide, the gospel makes a distinction between two groups. It is most assuredly good news to those that believe, however it is bad news to those who do not. How was the love of the father good news to the younger brother, but bad news to the older (although he still holds out the offer of good news)?

“The gospel is distinct from [the way of moral conformity and the way of self-discovery]: In its view, everyone is wrong, everyone is loved, and everyone is called to recognize this and change. By contrast, elder brothers divide the world in two: 'The good people (like us) are in and the bad people, who are the real problem with the world, are out.' Younger brothers, even if they don't believe in God at all, do the same thing, saying: 'No, the open-minded and tolerant people are in and the bigoted, narrow-minded people, who are the real problem with the world, are out.'

But Jesus says: 'The humble are in and the proud are out' (see Luke 18:14).”

The Prodigal God
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3. Comment on the above quote.
4. Do you see yourself with a mindset and attitude like one of the sons? Do you see the truth of the third way, the gospel way, and how it is fundamentally different than the way most people view life? Explain.

Day 5: Justification

Read Luke 18:9-14 (we will study this parable in detail later)

“Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardons all their sins, accepts and accounts their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.”

Westminster Larger Catechism
Question 70: What is justification?

1. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector is one of Jesus's great teachings on justification. Compare this to the parable of the Prodigal Son. How are they similar?
2. Notice the actions of the father. When he saw the younger son at a great distance he ran to him to embrace him. When the elder son refused to join the banquet the father left his guests to plead with his son. Both actions, running and leaving the banquet, were seen as extremely shameful and disrespectful in the culture at that time. At what cost to the father does he seek to justify his sons? At what cost to God did He seek to justify us?

Justification is a twofold declaration by God. God declares us not guilty because Christ shed his blood for us, absorbing the wrath of God that should be placed upon us and canceling the guilt of our crime. God also declares us righteous, not because we earned it, but because Christ earned it on our behalf. Christ was perfectly obedient, even to His death on the cross.

3. For the younger son, did the father both forgive his sin and make him rich? What does this teach us about justification?
4. For the older son, did the father seek to change his heart and forgive his sin? Where does the older son's riches come from?
5. Speaking about this parable, Tim Keller said, “[Both sons] wanted the father's things, not the father.” Are you more concerned about getting the things of God (e.g. God's blessings) than getting God Himself?