

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### The Prodigal Son

**Reading:** Luke 15:11-24

Among the most well known and memorable parables which the Lord spoke was that of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son. While the basic message is the same, the fundamental truths being taught are: something of value was lost, there was a sincere searching for it, and great rejoicing when it was found. However, there were some differences in the three stories. When the woman lost the coin she searched for it because it was of value. The same with the sheep and the son, but regarding the son, there was no searching for him by the other son. In the case of the lost coin the coin had no consciousness of being lost; in the case of the lost sheep there would have been a consciousness of being lost. Noticeable is the fact that neither the coin or the sheep determined to be lost, but the sheep would have known it was lost. Finally, in the case of the son, he deliberately turned his back on the father's house and purposefully went on a path which led to him being lost. It is a triplicate picture of a sinner.

- a) Some have no awareness of being spiritually lost, that is, not where they could be and perfectly safe.
- b) Some are aware that due to sins committed they know they are not in fellowship with God.
- c) Some have, with willfulness, set aside the teachings of the gospel and the things which delight the Father and gone their own way. The scriptures say, "We have turned everyone to his own way" (Isa. 53:6); "There is none that doeth good" (Rom. 3:12); "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).
- d) Many who fall into these categories believe that when God sets the scales of heaven in place all their good works will be on one side and sins on the other and by that means will determine if they will enter Heaven. In the parable God says, "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees" (Lk. 3:9). To make it more plain, even as the human lives on this earth, they are "condemned already" (Jn. 3:18). The only way to heaven is: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; Not of works" (Eph. 2:8-9).

When did the son leave the father's house? It is easy to think that the son left the father's house when he got his portion from his father. The truth is, he had left the father's house in his heart some time previous. So many people are like the prodigal son. From earliest days God has been waiting for people to come to Him, just like the father in the parable. With open arms He says, "Come unto me" (Matt. 11:28), "Come let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). Yet, with each passing day, the welcoming offer is refused and the false teachings we have been taught in churches becomes more deeply imbedded in hearts and minds.

#### Why do people reject God's salvation?

Three of the reasons people reject God's salvation is the same as the young man in the parable.

- a) He had a faulty vision of what was important.
- b) He couldn't wait to get that which was apparent to him, the things of the fathers which he in love had provided.

c) He could not resist the attractiveness he heard about, saw and tasted of the world that the father was no part of. He had to be let go, “freed” from the father until having lived the life of brokenness and humiliation he could go no further.

### **He had a faulty vision of what was important**

How many people are like that? Dissatisfaction marks their lives. They see a new car, a bigger trailer, a better home, a chance to get a bigger wage, always thinking these things is what gives life meaning. The sad reality is the new toy is only exciting for a little while. It can only be boasted of for a short time and then it loses its excitement. We eventually learn that nothing of this world can satisfy. One has only to look at Hollywood and see how many of the wealthy, the glamorous, the stars and the rappers commit suicide, even at an early age. They go their own way and life appears so wonderful but inside they are empty. For many it is a world of drugs, drink, parties, sex and when they hit the bottom, they give up and commit suicide. They, like the prodigal son, had a faulty perception of what was important in life.

### **He could not wait to get that which was apparent to him**

A lack of patience, he wanted it now, he was discontent with what he had, ignorant of how well he was cared for and loved.

- a) This attitude led to many problems, wanting more possessions
- b) He had no gratitude, just selfishness, because he took the father’s money and walked away

If one is not grateful with what they have in a loving family home they will never be contented or satisfied with the offerings of an ungodly world.

### **He could not resist the attractiveness he heard about, saw and tasted of the world**

We live in an age of “me to” and “I am owed a lavish lifestyle etc”. Here in the Vancouver area there are a lot of university students whose parents have given them everything, including expensive cars. The problem is, just like the prodigal, they cannot handle or value that which they had not worked for. They show immaturity and foolishness. Many adults are the same. They try to win lotteries, always wanting more, and so often if they do win can’t handle the money and end up broke. They can’t resist the pleasures of the world, the dance halls, the corrupt movies, the fleshy entertainment until they hit rock bottom or spend all that they have. The so-called pleasures of this world cannot satisfy. Contentment is only found in knowing Christ and as the Scriptures record, “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6).

It is always amazing how people will gather around an individual when it is known they have money. I know a man who lives in Australia. He flew home to see his mother in Ireland but she had to pay the fare and it had to be first class for he and his girlfriend. When he was in Ireland he had lots of friends for he provided drinks for them night after night. Then the money dried up, and no one wanted him. Like the prodigal son, he mistook being used for friendship until he learned that people in life want what you have and can get out of you, but when the money is no longer available, then the individual is no longer of any use to them.

The young man in the parable was then bereft of all his friends, a Jew in the pig pens, a disgrace to his heritage, and penniless. In the depths of being as it were, “living on the streets”. God used these circumstances to change him, to wake him up to reality. Sometimes the Lord will cause a famine in ones life so that they will turn to Him, i.e. one’s health or wealth.

### **He could not go on living the life of brokenness, and humiliation**

As the Lord told the story, those who heard it must have wondered, “Why did the father not go after the wayward son?” The answer is quite simple. The son had to hit rock bottom before he would be ready to come home and he had to come home of his own volition. There are times when God lets the wayward sinner continue on their downward path until they can see the emptiness of life or the uselessness of trying to satisfy God with their futile good works. For some, even when things are darkest and although the Lord is still standing like the father lovingly waiting for them, yet they still reject Him and His salvation. At this crisis junction in life they turn their backs to Him, thinking that the only way out is by committing suicide. In the son’s darkness and shame two things began to dawn on him:

- a) As in every case, when God leaves a human to their own way they will feel that nobody cares for them. Despite being loved, the darkness is so deep they just cannot accept that. Furthermore, there is no one to stand beside them, all their so called friends are gone. It is a fact that very few commit suicide when around friends. Alone

they might overdose on drugs or walk to the top of a bridge or building, and as one who tried to commit suicide but failed said, "The moment I let go of the railing, I knew I had made the biggest mistake of my life".

- b) The second reality that became so real to him was, it was not his brother's fault he was in such a despised place, it was his own. It was not the father's fault he was without a cent, it was his own. He had made the decision to leave home, he had made the decision to reject the father's love, it was all his own doing. God sends no one to Hell, nor does God or anyone else cause a person to be a miserable being or a drunk on skid row, it is all their own doing. In some cases, anger like a cancer boils within them, or a social drink becomes a master, or a momentary glance at a sex movie takes hold on the individual. Whose fault is it? If a person rejects the open invitation of God for their salvation and deliberately neglects the offer of peace with God and ultimately finds themselves languishing in hell for eternity, who made the decision? who rejected the gospel? who had no time for the salvation provided? It is the individual's own decision and now they learn, like the prodigal son, there are consequences for their actions.

This son recognized his only hope was to return to his father, to turn his back on where he was and to come with a broken spirit to the father. Having made the decision to return he got up and went. There was no time to waste. He went home knowing he would be received again by the father. What a beautiful lesson for anyone unsaved. God is still waiting with open arms saying, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Well has the hymn writer penned the words:

God is calling the prodigal, come without delay,  
Hear, O hear Him calling, calling now for thee.  
Tho' you've wandered so far from His presence, come today,  
Hear His loving voice calling still.

*Calling now for thee,  
O weary prodigal, come;  
Calling now for thee,  
O weary prodigal, come.*

Patient, loving and tenderly still the Father pleads,  
Hear, O hear Him calling, calling now for thee;  
O return while the Spirit in mercy intercedes,  
Hear His loving voice calling still.

Come, there's bread in the house of thy Father, and to spare,  
Hear, O hear Him calling, calling now for thee;  
Lo! the table is spread and the feast is waiting there,  
Hear His loving voice calling still.

*. . . . Charles H. Gabriel*

*. . . Rowan Jennings*

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