

# Peace in Forgiveness

Luke 15:1—3, 11—32 (v. 24)

## Introduction

We tend to make the parables of Jesus about us. So, we call this parable in **Luke 15** **The Prodigal Son**, because the prodigal represents us. But if we think of God as the main character, a better name for this is **The Forgiven Son**, because that's what God does in this parable. Today, we focus on the Forgiven Son and finding **PEACE IN FORGIVENESS**.

## The Fall

In the introduction to the younger son, we see he has a bad case of “Me-itis.” He’s thinking about no one but himself and says to his father, “It’s my money, and I want it now!” This was the first sin. Lucifer, thinking only about himself, tried to take over heaven, tried to be God. That’s how he knew how to get to Adam and Eve. All he had to do was convince them the forbidden fruit would make them like God. When we think only of ourselves, we separate ourselves from the Father, just as the younger son did.

## Our Condition

Thinking about oneself tends to make one short-sighted. The younger son was prodigal. Prodigal means to spend recklessly. And we see later, by his brother’s description, that his reckless spending is associated with immorality. At first, it’s all fun and games ... until the bottom falls out. The young man finds himself penniless, friendless, and destitute. A life of sin may be fun for a while, but at some point, it catches up with you. Life away from God is meaningless (Read Ecclesiastes 1:2—3). “Under the sun” means all things on earth without God.

## Our “Solution”

The only thing our young friend can do is try to get a job. But he has no skills, except farming. So, he hires himself out to a farmer and takes the worst, lowest, most demeaning job imaginable. This job doesn’t even pay enough to put food on the table. When we try to fix our life ourselves, we find that works-righteousness doesn’t work.

## Law

Next, we see the young man hit with the Law. The Law points out our sin and shows us just how far from God we have strayed.

### *Awareness of Sin*

Sitting with the pigs, he realizes how good he had it at home. In fact, even his father's hired hands have it better than he does now.

### *Repentance*

So, he comes up with a plan. He will repent ... well, sort of. His idea of repentance is a half-hearted attempt at bargaining. *"I'm not worthy to be called your son. Could I be a hired servant?" (v. 19)*. Sometimes, even when we turn to God, we are still thinking about ourselves and trying to bargain with Him – "Get me out of this and I will try to do better."

### *Confession*

The interesting thing is that when he tries to say this to his father, the father cuts him off and all he can get out is *"I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (v. 21)*. But that's all God needs to hear. That is a pure confession. "I am a poor, miserable sinner."

### *The Gospel*

And with that, he experiences the Gospel of forgiveness. *"This My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (v. 24)*. So true. As Paul says: *we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1)*. But what all came with that forgiveness? He is reinstated to full sonship. We receive the robe of Christ's righteousness, the ring of honor and unity, and the shoes of the Gospel of peace. We receive forgiveness of sins, freedom from sin, death, and the devil, the hope of eternal life, and the love of the family of God. Talk about **PEACE IN FORGIVENESS!**

### *The Other Brother*

But what about the older brother? Traditionally, he represents the Jewish people. He has all his father's gifts, but he doesn't recognize or appreciate them. Another way of looking at him is that he represents all who rely on their own righteousness for their salvation. Those who trust in their works, who don't feel the need of a Savior. He doesn't forgive his brother. He is as far away from the father as his brother was. So, he doesn't receive forgiveness.

### *Peace in Forgiveness*

There is peace in forgiveness, but no peace in being unforgiven.

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*And the peace of God,  
Which surpasses all understanding,  
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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