

The Parable of The Prodigal Son, or more accurately,
The Revealing of a Gracious Father's Heart

READ Luke 15:1-3,11-32 This is not mainly the story about 2 disrespectful sons but about a most gracious father.

Context:

- *Who were the 2 types of people Jesus was speaking to at this event?
- *What problem did each group have before God?

The 2 sons represent these 2 groups.

Younger son's story:

- * How did the younger son dishonor his father by asking for his inheritance early, before his father died?

"Wealth" in v.12 In Greek = Bios, meaning: life, manner of life, livelihood. The father literally tore apart his life for his disrespectful son.

- * What did the son do with this wealth?

"Squander" here is like separating wheat from chaff. His wealth just blew away. Then famine came and limited his options.

- * What finally got him to come to his senses?
- * What reason did he go back home? Was he truly repentant or something else?

READ Rom. 2:4

- * How does this verse apply to our lives in this context?

The father didn't just give the son any robe, but what kind of robe?

READ Zech. 3:1,3-4

- *What are the filthy rags a symbol of?
- *What has God done for us?
- *What should be our response?

Older brother's story:

- *How did he disrespect his father?

The attitude he had is the basis of religion, *"I do this for You, God, and now what's in it for me?"*

Older Brother Test: As a mirror, do you see yourself in any of these?

1. Joyless life: He didn't care about pleasing his father and didn't appreciate what he already had, which led to a miserable existence.

*What is the antidote to this attitude?

2. Anger: *"They got the blessing and I didn't."*

*What do I need to remember to combat this attitude?

3. Record keeping: *"Look at all I have done for the Kingdom."* This can lead to a joyless life.

*What can we do to stop doing this?

4. Spirit of Ungratefulness: *"Where's my share? I've been faithful."*

*How can we combat this thinking?

5. Judgmental: *"How come others are being blessed, and I do all the right things?"* Jealousy

*How does understanding undeserved grace wipe this out?

6. Burden of obedience: Obeying for the wrong reasons, which is the core of religion.

*Why should we obey, and how does this keep obedience from being a burden?

The older brother didn't understand or appreciate his position with his father, that he would receive all that the father had. He was stuck in the moment and didn't have the long view in mind. All God has He has given us in Jesus. We gain His inheritance through Grace, and only Grace. God gives lavishly to both brothers, as undeserving as we both were.

*Who are you in this story, the younger or older brother?

*What is one "older brother" attitude you need to work on?

*What do you need to do to combat this attitude?

Jesus didn't finish the story.

*If this story were about you, how would the story end?

Wherever you are, you don't have to be stuck there, either in the pig pen or out in the field. God's love and grace extends out to you to come home in repentance, to receive all He has for you.