

Luke 15:11-32

A conversation started like this, “There are so many bad things in this world from environmental issues like air and water pollution, virus and sickness to crimes and dishonesty.” The other person responded “If you could, would you remove everything bad from this world? Will you eliminate all viruses like COVID?”. “Yes”. Will you eliminate all the murders? A “yes” after a long pause. Will you eliminate your son and your siblings since they lie to you often? The answer is “no”. If you have a reason not to do away with everything bad, is it possible God has a reason, too? Today, we will explore this topic in the book of Luke (Read Luke 15:11-32).

Book of Luke is the third book in the New Testament, and the third gospel book. It recorded Jesus’ life in a chronological order. Luke presented Jesus as the Son of Man, or the “perfect man” without sin to save us (Luke 19:10). One of the key features of the book of Luke is the many parables presented including this unique parable of the prodigal son where the other gospel books don’t have. As we study this, we can understand God’s strong desire towards mankind.

1) Freedom to depart

God created us in His image but allows us to have the freedom to choose. We can choose to spend and waste what He has given us. We can choose to walk away from Him and not to acknowledge His relationship with us. Is it true today that the world is degrading through our misuse and abuse of the environment? Is it true that many people don’t believe in God today? The prodigal son parable shows this son got his father’s belongings and wasted them. He left his father and went on his own way. This son didn’t realize his mistake at the beginning, and didn’t realize how hurtful was it to the father. His own way led him to destruction and emptiness. Today, so many persons begin to realize the destructive way he/she is in, and the emotional and spiritual emptiness one has.

2) Father already paid

The father already paid for the prodigal son’s wasteful expenses when he decided to leave but he didn’t realize it. He thought those money was his own wealth, and his life was his own until he finally became to realize how broken he was.

Today, we are away from God. We are not perfect due to our nature (Rom. 3:23). Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Also see Isa. 55:6-7). God sent His only son Jesus onto this world to die to us. Our heavenly Father already paid for the penalty each of us deserve (Rom. 5:8).

II Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." That is why God is not going to do away with everything bad right now. He wants to restore and save us.

3) Forever home celebration

Let's read verses 21-24 again. The prodigal son at this point had realized he has sinned. That was the beginning of his repentance and entering to the welcome home celebration. The father was so happy and brought out the best to him and put out a party.

In the same way, God welcomes each of us to go back to Him (John 3:16). This is an eternal life that is forever home with God (II Cor. 5:1, John 1:12, Psm. 23:6). "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent (Luke 15:7)". It is a great joy for a church to have members accepting Jesus as savior and Lord (Rom. 15:7). There is a celebration whenever someone being saved and baptized. Church members rejoiced together and not like the other son in this parable.

Are you restless, tired, spiritually empty, hopeless, sinned or don't understand the bad things happened around you like the prodigal son? This parable reveals the truth to you. If you have not received Jesus as your savior and Lord, you can do it today! God is like the father in this parable which is eagerly waiting for you to come home. Come back as His children to enjoy eternity with Him. All you need to acknowledge is you are not perfect and sinful, but Jesus has already died for your sin so that you can have eternal life when you accept Jesus as your savior and Lord. If you have accepted Jesus as your savior and Lord, welcome those new members with joy and celebrate with them. Examine yourself are you falling away from God similar to the prodigal son? Correct your path if that is the case in order to walk closely with God! God wants to restore and save and not to eliminate life.