

God Bless Broken Road That Led Me Straight to Him

In the context of Luke 15:11-24, Jesus has been dealing with the religious elite of his day. I find it interesting, that Jesus never really have a problem with sinners. He never had a problem communicating with common people. It was always the religious people who gave him problems.

The “religious” leaders just could not understand Jesus’ preoccupation with those who seem so ungodly. Of course, the real problem was with God.

So Jesus points out this fact through the use of a story. The story is one of a man with two sons. Let’s read it from the book of Luke the 15th chapter.

“A man had two sons. 12 The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. 13 “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. 14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. 16 The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. 17 “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man.”’ 20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ 22 “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began. Luke 15:11-24 (NLT)

Life is full of surprises. Most of those surprises are not new ones. Just as you seem to be getting a handle on life you grow a little older and the issues change. Marriage can be a surprise. Children, jobs, and even churches can sometimes be very surprising.

Luke 15 is the lost and found department of the New Testament. Jesus wants to illustrate to this group of “teachers” what it takes to truly pleased God, uses three stories.

The first one is about lost sheep. A shepherd had 100 sheep and they lost one wouldn’t he miss the one enough to go out and search for it. If you are blessed enough to find where did he rejoice. The 99 that were safe are still safe and now the one is back home again.

Another story is about a lost coin. The numbers don’t mean much. We tend to have a fascination with them. I believe that’s why Jesus uses different numbers in each one of the stories. The fact is, there was one point lost. Should she be satisfied to have what was left? Or would she indeed search for that lost coin? She would certainly search for it. When she found it she would be glad.

We come to our story about a man and his two sons. The youngest of the two (there are many mistakes in you that are fixed in time) once his part of the inheritance, now! He doesn’t want to wait until the old man is “dead.” He doesn’t want to wait his turn. The eldest son by virtue of being firstborn should have the right to inheritance first.

But that will not do for our boy. The story shows us some of the revelations that are waiting for every person who will come back to the father in faith.

They will learn in time that their notions about leaving home and having a big time all nonsense. Those of us who are old enough now have learned from some of the lessons of our youth and can see this quite clearly. The problem is that the young cannot.

That by the way is the difference between use and mature adulthood. Often young people can do just as much if not more physically than the older can. It is the experiences that set them apart. No matter how bright we might be in our early years we lack the experience to make wise decisions. With some simply takes time. Maturity is a product time.

His father gives him and gives him his inheritance early. And then we read the story of a young man's independence. It led him away to the big city. The new environment has many new surprises for our little fellow. I'm sure at first he was surprised that he could make such friends so easily. When you have money you have friends. But in our lack of maturity we see them as real buddies.

His dreams turn to nightmares when the money runs out. I can imagine all those big dreams. We've all had them. We've all thought that if we could just get away from all the rules and regulations we'd be much better off. Indeed we would be extremely happy ever a prayer for watching over us always getting into our business. I know I have those dreams, and I can imagine that you did as well.

If the Bible says there's "pleasure in sand for a season" in Hebrews chapter 11. One of the mistakes that mature believers make is not being completely forthright about pleasure. Often Christians will raise their children to believe that everything in the world is on pleasurable. I believe this is a great error.

In fact we have all enjoyed sin too much. Every young person is enticed, by their senses. They can see it, hear it, taste it, smell it and, feel it. There's no use to live in. The best thing to do is to be honest with them about the outcome of those sensations. Try to explain their temporary nature.

Sin is almost always fun for a while. Take sex for instance it always feels good. The dilemma comes when the law of supply and demand operates. If having two partners is better than one partner and logic tells me that free must be better than two. In all truth at sensuality increases to pleasure decreases. It is the same with all sin.

The amount of cocaine that gets me high today is less than what it will take tomorrow. The alcohol that supplies a "buzz" today will do nothing for me tomorrow. It must be added to. So that another law comes into effect and that is the law of diminishing returns.

Sin is a deviation from the truth. Therefore, it is a deviation from God. God is eternal and things are temporary. What ever we build on the foundation of God has permanence to it. That would rebuild on any other foundation last for only moments in time.

Real joy is always down in the father and not away from him. Though I have found many who have become disenchanted with the church, other believers, and even the clergy; I have never found anyone who was let down by our Lord. When you ask these people, who are by the way the most miserable of all people, when and if they have ever been happy? Their answer invariably is when they were in a right relationship with God.

Not only do these principles apply to God they apply to families. Families break up for many reasons. In the time that we live it seems almost any reason is good enough. Everyone gets hurt. I've been in ministry for a long time and I believe more pain comes out of the divorce that comes out of death. Reason, logic some form of understanding can be assigned to death, but especially for children the "whys" can never truly be resolved.

Not only were his notions about leaving home and big times fraught with surprises, but also the failure of his friends especially when he needed them was a revelation to him. The money has run out, and the friends of run

out. All of the fine parties and dinners are gone. They moved along somewhere else and left him behind. He is now alone. There he is alone with his own thoughts and deeds.

Yet, another bright idea, he'll get a job this time. After all it's an absolute must in his situation. He's not just from us and penniless but he is hungry. The terms used would make us think he was starving. So he gets his job. Goes to work with a man who cares nothing about him who works him hard but pays him little. He is miserable. To the point that he would eat in the food that the pigs were eating, but even that was not his.

Now he begins to think about home. He remembers his former condition. All of his, pie in the sky, ideas have flown away and he is left with a harsh reality. He remembers his father; food and I believe even the fun of the old homestead.

But he is not at home, and he doesn't quite know how to get back there. After all maybe they don't want him there anymore. Perhaps, he has worn out his welcome. But no more fancy ideas I'm sure his head was really. At the same time his body was losing strength. He had wasted away all that he had now he himself is wasting a way.

He awakens. He comes to his senses. The fog begins to clear a little. His mind is working through the alternatives. There are many good ones, at least that's the way he feels.

Suddenly, just as I believe his bad fortune began with an idea his world begins to turn around like a hinge on a brand-new idea. He decides that his father has plenty. Now even what his father has left is very appealing to him. He couldn't stand it just a short time ago. The old man just didn't understand.

He makes a decision that his father has hired servants that are doing much better than he is. He makes up his mind to go to his father admit his sin and ask him for a job. He probably debated within himself whether or not he could change. Even if he did would anyone else accept him? Would they give him another chance?

He decided he should change. It was the right thing to do. Then he took a step further and decided that he could change. He could at least make an attempt. Added to this string of thoughts he decided that he would change. He left and pride he will return humility. He left running he returns crawling. He left with a fine smile a pride he returns begging.

You too can change your life if you just make the right decision right now. Maybe you see yourself in this young man's life? It may well be that you're not really young anymore? But you made the same foolish mistakes.

Wake up, stir yourself, come to your senses and come back home. God will help you change the direction of your life if you come.

But the revelation that the prodigal had was that his father was actually waiting for him. He had been keeping a lookout because the Bible says the father saw him from afar off.

If I had more time I would share the significance of the running father. In this culture father never ran especially toward a disobedient child. But the father could see him where he was far away.

He had expected anything of this. There might be a good swift kick, some yelling, a brawl, but not that his father was waiting. What if they got us thinking about you right now? How does he feel about your decisions? All those times you have failed?

In fact, every thought that God has toward you is motivated by his love. He is never thought about you in any other way. It has never been his desire to discipline. Though it may at times be needful and useful. It is always

his help that you will come home. Why would the Father have given his only Son for someone who He didn't really even love?

You can't believe how much he loved. How much he has been missed. Jesus tells us the father loved them so much that he forgave him and restored him.

There is a gulf between forgiveness and restoration. The father does both. Jesus died so that you can have the full benefit of real forgiveness and complete restoration.

Satan does not want you to believe this. He whispers in your ear detected your sense of guilt and shame. Anything he can do to keep you from seeing a father's true compassion and mercy. He wants you to like Adam and Eve questions the father's goodness.

There is a final revelation made to this young man. Coming home is a joyous occasion. Every other possible condition I'm certain that run through his mind but not joyful reunion. You might have expected a fight, even the father's total disapproval in withdrawal, but not his unreserved love and joy.

Some people were happy. And if you come home you will find that some people will be happy for you either. I called in the cronies, these of those people who want to hang with you just enough to see you hang. To keep you out of the father's will.

The second group I'll call phonies, there are those who will stand on your back to make them look taller. They are those religious people, hypocrites who condemn others would do just as they do.

But what an amazing season of joy it all came to. It's better than New Year's Eve, its a complete celebration. The father is well pleased.

Isn't that what we as believers say that we want? We want God to be pleased. We want God's will to be done. In all three of these stories it tells us about something or someone being lost. When they are found there's great joy. Jesus says that it is that way in heaven whenever one sinner and comes back home to the father.

All of these revelations awaiting for you when you were Shaker stuff away change your miserable condition rise up and returned to the father believing that he is ready to receive you forgive you and celebrate your being back home again.

What message do we have for the lost? For those who have made wrong turns and have found dead ends? Our message is this, you can wake up, you can change, and you can be forgiven.

In his service,

Dr. C. David White

nexus@nexusministry.com

nexusministry.com