

Good morning and welcome back again to the Berean Break. My name is George A. Sinkie and I am so glad to have you with me this morning. Before we begin let's go to God in prayer,

Great and Almighty God in heaven, Thank You for this day in our lives, We are so thankful for the many blessings that You have given to us. The greatest gift You gave was Your Son, Who died on the cross for our sins. We thank You also for Your word, Through which we can learn everything, We need to know about You, And Your will. We pray that we are convicted by Your word today, And that nothing will deter us from doing Your will. In Jesus' Name, we pray!! Amen!!

To briefly summarize what we looked at last week, we began to consider the twelve step program or process that the younger son went through in the story of the Prodigal Son. This parable is recorded for us in Luke 15 verses 11-32. On the first program we considered the six steps that he took to depart. Each of them was alliterated with the letter "d" as in depart. Those six steps were: Desire, Demand, Departure, Dissipation, Destitution, and Degradation. We also mentioned that in this parable the father is used to represent God and how each of these steps took the younger son faster and faster down a steeper and steeper slope until his feet could not keep up and he landed in the pig pen. Once the younger son departed from the father it says he went to a far country. There he was far away from the father's oversight. Far away from the father's instruction. Far away from the father's association. And while the father continued to love him, he was far away from the presence of the father's love.

When we left the younger son, last week, he was out slopping the hogs and wanting to eat the slop himself. But I also mentioned that the son was going to come to his senses. That is what we are going to consider in today's lesson, six basic steps that this younger son took to return to the father. Each of these steps will begin with the letter "r" like in return.

The first step is that of **realization**. This is what we see in Luke 15:17,

"But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

This step could be called recognition or even reflection. While sitting there in the pig pen, totally broke and hungry his mind takes him back to his father's house. But he is not thinking of his old room and his place of honor at the table, no he realizes he gave up that position. He is thinking of the fact that his father's hired men are well cared for, as it says, they have more than enough bread. This is one of the hardest steps for people to take, for them to admit that they need to change their relationship with God. So many people have fallen for the lies of Satan and think they are following God. They have fallen for the false doctrine of "faith only" bringing salvation. Or of one church is as good as another. Or of saying the "Sinner's prayer" and they will be saved. They do these things and then it is hard for them to make this step of realizing that they are not right with God.

The second step that this young man took was that of **repentance**. Just as his desire and demands lead him to depart from the father now if he wants to return to the father he has to turn around and go back. Read with me Luke 15:18-19

'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."

Repentance in order to be real and genuine has to lead a person to action. Once he had realized his situation he knew changes were in order. Listen to what Paul writes on this in 2 Corinthians 7:10

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

This young man could have had worldly sorrow and he would have

stayed there in the pigpen and starved to death. But instead he chose to have godly sorrow which produces repentance. This repentance is seen in the next, where he puts it in action.

Step three is **returning**. We see this in Luke 15:20

"And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.

This young man has changed his mind and he has changed his attitude and this has resulted in a change of life. Unfortunately there are many who talk about repentance but they never carry it through with the actions of repentance. We may say they talk the talk but they do not walk the walk.

Once he comes to the father he takes a fourth step and that is **resignation**. Remember what the young son decided back there in the pigpen. Read it again there in Luke 15:18-19

'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."

Even the warm reception that he received from the father did not deter him from this decision, as we read in Luke 15:21

"And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

Far too often we try to mellow down what we say, such as "if I've done something wrong." We need to learn from this lesson to admit it like this young man, "I have sinned."

Step five is a step that this young son was not thinking of and yet is one given by the father and that is **restoration**. Consider these points made about the father's actions. Luke 15:20

"And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.

Luke 15:22-24

"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry.

The boy came back to be a servant but the father welcomed him back as a son and greatly rejoiced. Remember in this parable the father is God and God rejoices over those who will come to Him.

That is what the sixth step is in this lesson - that there is **rejoicing**. This was not just a time of joy for the father alone but for all. They kill the fatted calf and have a big party.

Listen to Luke 15:6 concerning the lost sheep,

"And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

And Luke 15:9, concerning the lost coin,

"And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!'

Now let's read through the parts of this parable that we have considered in these two lessons. And as we read through this think about these twelve steps: Desire, Demand, Departure, Dissipation, Destitution, Degradation, Realization, Repentance, Returning, Resignation, Restoration, and Rejoicing. Let's read Luke 15:11-24,

And He said, "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. "And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" "And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry.

What about you? What is your relationship with God? Paul wrote in Romans 3:23 that we all have sinned, therefore we need to be forgiven. God's will for salvation is very simple. We need to hear the word of God and develop faith based on that word. Then our faith in God will cause us to repent, and confess and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. When we come up out of the watery grave of baptism we will be a new person and then it will be a time to rejoice with the Father. God invites you, Jesus the Christ invites you, the Spirit invites you, and we invite you, come to God on His terms and be saved today.

This Berean Break is brought to you, in love, by the pre-denominational and non-denominational church of Christ that meets at 1600 East First Ave. in Mitchell SD. You are welcome to meet with us at 10:00 Sunday Mornings for our assembly followed by a time of Bible Study, also on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 for an additional time to study God's Word. If you have a comment or a sincere Bible question, please phone us at 605-770-5555. We want to remind you of the non-denominational TV program, "KNOW YOUR BIBLE" on KDLT-TV at 9:00 on Sunday mornings. This is George A. Sinkie for the Lord's church, here in Mitchell, good-bye for now, Remember that we care about you and may God bless you as you do His will.

All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the: New American Standard Bible. 1986 (electronic edition.) La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.