

Good Morning and welcome to the Berean Break. My name is George A. Sinkie and it is so good to have you with me this morning. I consider it a privilege that you would entrust these 15 minutes of your time to me. But as we study the word of God together it will be time wisely used in growing in the knowledge of God. Once we have grown in knowledge of the will of God then we need to apply that will into our lives. I hope that you have your Bible handy, because it is the one and only standard that we need to use. Before we go into today's lesson, let's go to God in prayer

All Mighty and All Loving God in heaven, Again we come before You, With thankfulness in our hearts. We thank You for this day in our lives, And for Your Word, That tells us everything You want us to know. We thank You for Jesus, And His death on the Cross, That paid our debt. Prick us in our hearts, So that we will obey Your will. We ask that You be with us in this study, That we can see and understand Your will. And that we can apply it into our lives. In Jesus' Name !!AMEN !!

On two previous Berean Breaks we looked at the Prodigal Son that we read about in Luke 15:11 and following. We looked at twelve steps that this young man took - six were away from the father and then six were going back to the father. These were good lessons based on the truth of God's word that we need to apply into our lives. But here in Luke 15 there is also another son mentioned and today we are going to consider what we can learn from him.

Throughout Luke 15 here, Jesus is telling a series of three parables and each one of them has basically the same message.

God Rejoices when Sinners Repent.

In this final parable Jesus goes beyond this and deals with those who do not rejoice when that which was lost is found. The context of these parables gives us the reason why Jesus did this, let's read in Luke 15:1-2,

Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats

with them."

You see, these self-righteous Pharisees and Scribes were complaining because Jesus was receiving the tax-gatherers and sinners. These self-righteous individuals are who the older brother is representing in the parable. Let's go ahead and read the latter part of this parable and see the dealings that are going on with the older brother. Now remember the younger son has taken his inheritance and gone to a far off country, there he wasted all that he had and has now returned to be a servant. Let's pick up now in Luke 15, verse 25 and read Luke 15:25-32,

"Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be. "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' "But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began entreating him. "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.' "And he said to him, 'My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 'But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

In the first two parables here in this chapter and the first part of this parable, Jesus is giving hope and encouragement to those who would repent and come to God. If we will do that then God will rejoice and welcome us back. But here in the latter part of this chapter Jesus turns His attention to how others react to the sinner's repentance and to God's rejoicing. Let's look now at several points that we can learn from this older brother.

First he was "angry." He was angry that the father would rejoice

at the return of this prodigal son. He was angry that the father had killed the fatted calf and was having a party. He was angry that he did everything the father said and yet the father never had a party for him. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia he warn them about this kind of anger in Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But we must understand that not all anger is sinful. Anger is one of the emotions that God has given to mankind because we are created in the image of God and it is an emotion that God Himself possess. Read with me from the book of Lamentations in Lamentations 2:1-3

How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion With a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth The glory of Israel, And has not remembered His footstool In the day of His anger. The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared All the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down The strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground; He has profaned the kingdom and its princes. In fierce anger He has cut off All the strength of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand From before the enemy. And He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire Consuming round about.

The thing that we need to understand is that God is always right and always just in His anger. This is where we as people need to be very, very careful not to have the wrong kind of anger.

Listen to Paul in Ephesians 4:26-27

Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

We need to deal with our anger quickly and in a godly manner or else the devil will use it to his advantage. Satan takes little things and makes them seem big and pokes and prods them on to get us to sin. That is why God warned us through Paul to be aware of the schemes of the Devil. Paul continues on here in Ephesians 4 with what we should do with our anger. Listen to Ephesians 4:30-31

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Getting back to Luke 15, what else do we see in the life of this older brother. Read with me again Luke 15:29-30

"But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

This older brother was jealous. Unfortunately we do not have the time to look at them this morning but there are two excellent examples of this in the Old Testament. The first is Cain and Abel, Cain was so jealous that he killed his own brother. The second are the children of Israel. Joseph's older brothers would have killed him but instead they sold him into slavery and crushed the heart of their father by telling him that he was killed by a wild animal. Oh yes that "green monster" was alive and well in this older brother just like it was in the Pharisees and scribes as they watched Jesus accepted these "sinners."

Another attribute of the Pharisees and scribes that we see in this older brother is their self-righteousness. Notice what the son says here in verse 29,

"I have never neglected a command of yours."

This boy thought it was all about law-keeping. And yet just like the Pharisees and scribes it was more his own conceived laws than what the father had actually said. Consider a couple of points. The father right here is pleading with him to come in and yet he is not obeying this will of the father is he? No he is not. Jesus addresses this issue directly in Matthew 15:1-9

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God," he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'"

This is seen today in the realm of denominationalism. All denominational groups, large and small, have their own creeds and catechisms and they are divided. And just like these Pharisees their hearts are just as far away from God and their worship is just as vain. Now don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying they are not sincere. Many, many of these Pharisees were sincere in what they did, but they had decided to follow the wrong standard, which as Jesus terms it are the "precepts of men." Just like Jesus I call men back to the word of God. It is the one and only sure standard.

This older brother has many lessons to teach us. But we have to understand that he is teaching them from the negative perspective. He is showing what NOT to do. We need to NOT get carried away in our anger. We need to NOT be jealous. And we need to NOT be self-righteous. Will you rejoice when people turn to God? Will you yourself come to God on His terms? Will you believe and repent and

confess and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins? If you will, then God and His people will rejoice. If you won't, then God looks longingly down that road wondering when will that child come to their senses. Why keep the Father waiting - obey His will 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.