

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 2

The Prodigal Son

Objects to have:

Pictures of three short-haired, well-dressed men and some pictures of long-haired, badly dressed men
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Stand before the class with your Bible open to Luke chapter 15.) I hold in my hands the Bible. The Bible is a wonderful book, the most wonderful book in the whole world. Within this one book are many books; there are sixty-six books in the Bible. In most of the books are chapters and in the chapters are verses; that's how the Bible is divided.

Jesus told a story that is found in chapter 15 of the book of Luke; hear Jesus' story. Jesus' stories are called parables.

Telling the story:

(Hold up one by one the pictures of the short-haired, nice-looking men while saying the following.) Jesus said in this parable, "A man had two sons." The man, I think, talked to his two sons one day telling them, "Boys, I have had a good business. The Lord has blessed me. I have earned more money than I will ever need. Someday this very big ranch which I own will belong to you two boys. Older Son, you will have this much money." The father told the older son how much money he would get some day. "Younger Son, you will have this much money." The father told the younger son how much money would belong to him. "Men, you won't get this money now, but when I am very old, you will get it. In the meantime, I will pay you for the work that you are doing."

How exciting that meeting was to the two sons. The younger son, especially, could not forget what his father had told him. Just think, to have maybe thousands of dollars be his someday, what he could do with that much money! In the days to come, he kept thinking about how wonderful it would be to have that much money right now.

The younger son went to talk to his father. "Dad, I want you to give me right now the money that is mine." He did not want to wait to get what would someday be his. The father had told the son how much would be his someday, so he could not tell him no. I am sure, however, that his father told him how much better it would be to stay home. But, he gave his son the money that was set aside for him.

How eagerly the young son clutched the money that had been given to him. He decided that he would not have to stay home and work any longer. He decided to go live in the big city rather than to live on this big ranch where there was a lot of work to do. He would not go to Sunday school and church services anymore. He would get away from church people. He would have as his friends people who were having what he thought was a good time. He also would not have to work hard.

The young son left home. The father was very sad as he watched his younger son go. The younger son's father knew what was best, but the young man did not believe his dad. His dad knew that his son would not be happy in the life that he had chosen for himself.

The young man went to the big city. He found a place that was very fancy and cost a lot of money. Then he went to one of the big stores and looked at every suit on the racks. He found some suits that fit him. How nice they were! He decided to take this one and that one, and that one. He bought whatever he wanted to buy. He had no thought of how much money he was spending. He would not dream of working to have that much money again. He went to the fanciest of restaurants where he met some people. Those people saw how much money he was spending. He certainly seemed to be a person whose money would never run out. They decided to make him their friend so that he could spend his money on them, too. Day after day all he did was spend his money. He did

not work in order to get more money. He started to date girls who did not love Jesus. The crowd he ran with were loud. They talked badly. They drank liquor. They smoked. They used dope. They listened to rock music.

Can you guess what was happening with his money? He was spending more and more and had less and less money. Pretty soon he looked at his wallet. He did not have enough money to pay the rent on his apartment. He did not have enough money to buy food to eat. He had spent all his money in riotous living, Jesus said. He was not keeping himself clean, either, and his mind was not working right. He tried to get a job. By this time he was beginning to look like this. (Hold up the pictures of the sinful-looking young men.) The right kind of businessman would not hire him. He could not get a job. Suddenly one day after paying for a little food to eat, he realized that he did not have even one penny left. He had no money. He could not keep living in the fancy place where he had been living. He decided to sell some of his clothes because he did not have enough to eat. He sold some clothes just to buy some food. He sold his jewelry just to have a place to stay. He still could not get a job.

This younger son, sad and poor and hungry, decided that he would go to a farmer and ask him for a job. The farmer gave him the job of feeding the pigs. (Talk for a moment about how pigs live.) The younger son sat on the fence, I think, and watched the pigs. Jesus said that this young man said, "I remember how it was back home. All the people who work for my father have enough to eat, enough to wear, and a nice place to live. Look at me. I am the son of my father, not just someone who would work for him. I do not have enough clothes to wear, nor a nice place to stay, nor enough to eat. I am so hungry that I could eat the corn husks that the pigs are eating." The younger son decided to go back home.

The younger son did not know how his father would treat him when he got home. What he did not know was that the father still loved him. Even though the son had done wrong, the father still loved him. The younger son's dad would look down the road and watch for his son to come home. One day he saw someone coming down the road, someone who was about the same height as his son. The person walked a little like his son. Could it be his son? This dirty, ragged young man, could he be his son? The father started to go toward him. Yes, it was his son! The father ran to meet him. When the father got to his son, he put his arms around him and told him to come home.

"I am not good enough to live in your house, Father. I am not good enough to be called your son any longer. I have sinned terribly." The father seemed not to hear his young son. He called everybody to come to a party. He called all the servants and his wife to prepare a good meal, good meat and mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and apple pie. The father told his son to go take a bath. Then he brought to him the nicest suit any man has ever owned, a nice pair of shoes, a shirt; he even put a beautiful ring on his finger.

Then everybody had a party. The father said, "Look everybody. My son who had gone away has come home again. Be glad, and rejoice with me." My, what a party they had! How glad the father was to have the boy back home, but how sad it was that the son had not wanted to live the way God wanted him to live and the way his father wanted him to live. Oh, the son still belonged to the father and the father took him back home, but how much better it would have been if he had kept on doing the work he was supposed to do and living the way he was supposed to live!

His father was so happy to have him home! Jesus said that God feels happy too, when people ask Him to forgive them of their sin!

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Luke 15:10—"...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."