

The Prodigal - 2 of 2

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon explores the themes of forgiveness, redemption, and the dangers of legalism through the parable of the prodigal son.

Duration: 12:23

Scripture: Luke 15:7, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Redemption", "Grace"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the sacrificial nature of Christ through the parable of the Prodigal Son, illustrating how the fatted calf symbolizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. He reflects on the dangers of pride and legalism, warning that even those who appear righteous can stray far from God. Ravenhill highlights God's immense love for sinners and the joy in heaven over one who repents, contrasting the attitudes of the older brother with the grace extended to the wayward son. He calls for a recognition of our own shortcomings and the need for humility, reminding us that redemption is available to all, regardless of past sins. The sermon concludes with a plea for divine mercy and restoration for those who have fallen away.

Transcript

Kill is the word to sacrifice, it's the word that is used to sacrifice an animal, not just to kill an animal, but it's the literal word that is used to sacrifice an animal. It's the word that is used where Paul says, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. It's that identical word.

And is it possible that the Father had there the fatted calf, in other words, that calf had to be absolutely perfect as you know, because it represented the Son of God. It had to be, you know, it couldn't be emaciated, it couldn't have any sort of disfigurement or deformity and so on. A gaunt, skinny, you know, cow would not be approved as a sacrifice.

And maybe the Father said from the very moment that son left, listen, I've made provision. And thank God he's made provision. He gave the best.

God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son. And let us be merry. Heaven rejoices over one sinner.

Again, God loves sinners, makes a beeline towards them. And this, the religious community, angry. And it's easy, isn't it? To judge people, say I'd never do that.

You know, loose living, prodigal son. I'd never end up in homosexuality, don't believe it. It's amazing what sin will take you into.

Things that you never dreamed of doing. And there's testimonies in this room, I never dreamed I'd end up in prison. I never dreamed I'd end up having a baby out of wedlock.

I never dreamed I'd abort a baby. I never dreamed I'd get hooked on pornography. I never dreamed that I'd end up as a homosexual.

It was the furthest thing from my mind when I was a kid. I used to go to church, I used to sing in the choir. I tell you, at least God said to me, this is far more plausible than this kid who was just, you know, always mad from a little boy and couldn't wait until he could just get off and sow his wild oats.

No, I don't believe that anymore. Oh, maybe that view's there. But I've seen far more people go this way.

That started off well, loving God, pressing into God, wanting the things of God, but then allowing that thing gradually to get a hold of their heart. Pride comes in, arrogance comes in, importance comes in, titles come in, and so on. And in a way, Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, you started off desiring holiness.

You desired to be a separated people. You desired, but you end up in legalism. You've too gone into a far country because that's who the older brother represents in the story.

He represents the scribe and the Pharisee. Oh, we never went into a far country. But his dad says, listen, your son has come, your brother's come home.

He says, no, this son of yours, not this brother of mine. He's not my brother. He may be your son, but he's not my brother.

I never broke a commandment, you know. Oh, we can adopt that sort of air, you know. It's easy, isn't it? I was raised in a Christian home.

I've never smoked a cigarette, never been drunk, never slept with anybody. Oh, I, I, I. Look how good I am. But that same sort of religiosity, that legalism.

I tell you something. The one that has been forgiven much can love much. That's the redeeming thing about God.

People that have been to the very depths, and I haven't. But they have a capacity to love like I don't. Because they know the pit from whence they've been dug.

You know, God always comes out a winner. And some of you have gone far, far deeper than I've ever dreamed of going. But I tell you this, you have a capacity.

He that is forgiven much can love much. Let's close. Father, your word again has given us a means of correction.

A means of reproof. A means of training. And Lord, we've tried to look at this story through, Lord, a different perspective tonight.

A Christian perspective. Of a man that wanted more. Of a man that wanted more.

A man that understood your heart to bless, to give, to supply revelation and understanding and insight and gifts. Yet, Lord, ended up in a far country. Lord, we can say there, but for the grace of God go I. Thank you, Lord, for your keeping grace.

And yet, Lord, to help us to learn. We think again of this tragic news today of, Lord, a brother that has lost everything now. We think of a congregation that has lost a shepherd.

Father, we think of a nation again that is going to use this to criticize the church. Think of a wife that, Lord, is no doubt at a wit's end. Children that have admired daddy.

Lord, all we can say is have mercy. Son of David, Lord, have mercy on this man. Bring him to his senses.

Father, even today, even tonight, Lord, wherever he is. Lord, somebody said there's already fear that he could take his life. Father, we ask God that you would give him a divine encounter.

Lord, you'd stop him in his tracks. Lord, you'd wrap your arms around him, Lord. And Father, make known again your incredible love.

That while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Lord, if it's possible, give him again the best robe. Let him be a testimony of your grace to this nation, Lord.

Even as he's been a testimony of disgrace. Father, raise him up once again. Let him be stronger, Lord.

Even like breaking a bone, it's stronger once it's healed than it has been before. Father, redeem this situation for your glory. Let him find his way back.

Find his way back, Lord, from that lifestyle of, Lord, depravity. Let him know again, Lord, forgiveness, cleansing. Let him have that ring of authority.

Lord, let him walk again in brokenness and humility. Let him be like Jacob, Lord. Let him walk with a limp, never forgetting the pit from whence he's been dug.

Lord, we're reminded again, according to statistics, that 18,000 ministers a year leave the ministry. Lord, this is not a rare thing. This man is well known, but Lord, there's thousands every single year, 1,500 pastors a month that step out of the ministry.

The number one reason, moral failure, loose living, joining themselves to some woman, some man. Yet, Lord, this story again is about your redemption, about forgiveness, about cleansing, about restoration. Thank you, Lord, for your love towards us.

Thank you, Lord, for so great a salvation. By the words of that song, mercy there was great and grace was free. Pardon there was multiplied to me.

There my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary. Thank you for the cross. Thank you, Lord, we don't have to earn it.

We don't have to prove. Don't have to do all these things, Lord, to sort of merit your acceptance. All we've got to do is say, Lord, I've sinned.

Forgive me. Thank you, Lord. You're not a king that we come into saying I may perish.

But we can come with boldness, confidence. The veil has been rent. We have access all because of the blood of the Lamb.

Maybe you're here tonight. You're sitting here, you've been listening to me and you say, you know, I don't think I've got the best robe. I've never really, I don't feel worthy to wear it.

I feel so ashamed of my past. I feel so ashamed of what I've done. I've taken drugs.

I've had an abortion. I've been divorced of this or whatever it is. I've been an alcoholic.

I've, I've raped. You know, whatever. You know, I, I know what you say sounds good, but I really don't believe it.

Listen, we need to believe the best robe. That's the grace of God. None of us, none of us merit any of that.

We can have the best robe. We can have the ring of authority. We can use the name that is above every name.

We have all the resources of heaven behind us. We're not slaves. We're sons.

We have shoes. Bless you. Turn with me if you will.

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