

The Father's Kiss

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon explores the profound love of God as illustrated through the parable of the prodigal son and the significance of true repentance and acceptance.

Duration: 1:05:24

Topics: "Gods Love", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the parable of the prodigal son, emphasizing the profound love and compassion of God towards sinners. It explores the deep repentance and acceptance experienced by the prodigal son upon returning to his father, highlighting the father's forgiveness and restoration. The sermon also touches on the older brother's reaction, showcasing the importance of humility and rejoicing in the repentance of others.

Transcript

We'll start with that point, he kissed him much. We'll start with that point, he kissed him much. Now, it follows the Greek quite closely and there are various translations of it, where it can be said he kissed him earnestly, eagerly, or kissed him often, and I'd like to just use that, he kissed him much.

He embraced him and kissed him. God is holy. Remember when Isaiah was in the temple and he saw the cherubim flying and shouting, God, the Lord of hosts is holy, holy, holy, then Isaiah said, woe is me for my lips are defiled.

God's love is phenomenal. Nevertheless, the cherubim did not shout out love, love, love, but rather holy, Our father planted maize, corn, a lot of it, and sometimes beans. But as an aside he had many pigs too.

Some of them were herded outside. Because there were too many for them to stay in the pigsty. The pigsty was well built.

Very thick walls. Built with bricks, not with things that are like stones, but with bricks. Built with stone, solid, thick, wide walls.

And then it had a wide gate which could be closed and opened. Now the dung of the pigs could flow out at the back. Now you can imagine, if you have many pigs, they make a mess everywhere where they are.

And so these pigs, many of them, there was a roof at the back and then this door, this gate. I said to my younger brother, let's run, for I was fond of running. I said to my younger brother, let's run, for I was fond of running.

So I challenged my brother to have a race. He could run behind the pigsty, I would run in front of it, and not just run, but jump, spring from step to step. He said okay.

He agreed. So we climbed onto the walls, and we ran on the walls. Now there were the various cubicles, and I would run on the wall, jump to the next side, and then to the next one.

And then I don't know whether it was the third or the fourth sty that I jumped onto the wall, when suddenly it seems like my foot was too much to the side, and I fell down. I still have a scar here on my chin, and it still troubles me when I shave. And that scar is from a wound I had when my chin hit the corner of the stone, and I fell into the mire of the pigs.

And I don't know how, but it seems like for a long time I was unconscious. And then I was assisted, one on one side, and then on the other side someone else, and they helped me to get home. My mother said, first you must be washed.

And it was a huge bath that we had, and I filled it with water, and they put some powerful soap so that it would really get rid of it. They scrubbed me, they scrubbed me properly. And then I let the water out, and I got out the bath.

My mother said, he still smells now. So they filled the bath again. And so the process began yet again, and they scrubbed me, and scrubbed me to try and get rid of the stink.

And then for a third time, because after the second bath they said I still smelt, and I would spoil the sheets, the blankets. And they did it again, the third time. But the smell of the pigsty wasn't completely gone, even after that.

That's why I tell you that I know first hand the smell of pig dung. And then after all that, they didn't show any feeling for my wound, they just spoke about the smell. And so that experience came to an end.

The smell and filth of the pigs, I know, I've been in it. We were thankful that the stone that I fell, and only under my chin, and not on my face, otherwise I would have had a really serious scar. I had many an accident in my childhood, my older brother can tell you far more, and it seemed like Satan really wanted to finish me off.

Once I was playing soccer, and there was an opponent, a football, and somebody else was kicking the ball in front of me, running fast, and I thought well, I'm going to go around the side of him and tackle him and take the ball. And I thought, oh my God, I'm going to run, I'm going to run, I'm going to run, I'm going to run, I accidentally, when I got the ball, stood on it, and so I tripped and went headlong into a stone wall with my head. But I'm still here by God's grace.

Now let's return to the swine. And so when I read this text, I thought this is almost unbelievable to understand this. That God can come down from heaven, he who is thrice holy, and embrace the sinner, and also kiss him much, I said, oh Lord, this is beyond my comprehension that you, the holy God, should embrace the sinner in such a manner.

For the person in the pigsty, remember that speaks of the sinner, this prodigal son was a great sinner. And if you read it in the Greek, you'll understand that he came from a very painful circumstance. In one place it shows that when he was hired, it's actually referring, it has a sexual connotation to it.

Like a man clinging to a woman. Could even be that he had fallen into homosexuality, and into the greatest filth. But God, thrice holy, saw the son, he saw him afar off.

For God sees us, my friends. We are as transparent as glass to God. Our actions and even our thoughts are all transparent to him.

Let me repeat that, it's as if we are made with glass. Right to the heart, and into the mind, the brain. God sees it all.

And he saw this son way off, far away. I'm not even referring to how he got to that far off place, the foreign land, his claiming of his inheritance. No, I'm just looking at the love of God towards the sinner, and the evil of sin.

There where he wished he could just have some food, but there was no one to feed him. In that circumstance, it dawned on him. Then he thought about his father.

Where he remembered that his father's servants, his hired servants, had so much food, and here am I, I'm in the pigsty, I have no food to eat. He looked at his rags. He looked at his own filth.

His body, his feet. The stain of the pig dung was all over him, everywhere. And then the day arrived where it dawned on him, and he said, I will repent and go back to my father.

And say, Father, I have sinned before you and before heaven. I'm not even worthy to be called your son. Make me just one of your slaves, one of your hired servants, for I'm not worthy to be called your son.

I want us to understand that. And you, Father, understand that too. The father didn't go out looking for him in the far off country and kiss him there.

No, not at all. He waited until he would see his own sin. Until he was convicted of his sin, when he recognized his evil, all that the money had squandered, having left his father's home, he saw all that with new eyes.

And the rags which he had on him. Until his decision to get up and go to the father and say, Father, I have sinned before you and before heaven. This wasn't just a fleeting thought.

It was a thought so deep, so profound, that he acted upon it and returned to his father. So that he would say there, Father, I repent, I have sinned. His repentance was a real repentance.

It was deep. Parents don't just accept a child who says, I'm repenting, but it is just a light hearted gesture. Look and see whether it really is true.

While still far off, his father saw him. His father saw him first. The son had probably not seen him yet.

The father knew that he was far off. The father saw him in his filth, in his sin, in the pigsty. All his sin, his father saw, his lying, his fighting, all the sin.

The father said, Father, I repent, I have sinned, I have sinned before you and before heaven. The father said, Father, I repent, I have sinned, I have sinned before you and before heaven. The prodigal's repentance was so deep that he left his sin behind.

He left his circumstances, he left his friends. And so it was a repentance that was true. Some people repent, but they still continue with the old sinful friends and with the things they've always done.

The parent can be easily bluffed by frivolous repentance, and it's not true. You need to see, has this person parted with the old ways and his old friends? He parted from these things and left them behind. Having left them, and then he was far off, far from his father.

But the father had seen him. What does the father do? The prodigal son was probably ashamed, was looking down, dragging his feet, wondering, will my father even accept me if I'm in this condition? And so the father saw him while far off. You see, he saw him always beforehand, but now this was a different day.

And the father ran to him. And now the father, an old man by now, ran to meet his son. How marvelous this.

When the prodigal met the father, he did not know how he would be received by him. But the father embraces him and kisses him for a long time. The son said, father, do not even call me your son.

I'm not worthy. Make me one of your slaves. But God, the father, received him in such a way.

In Greek, it speaks about having compassion on a person. That word is only used for the Lord Jesus and the father. That he felt compassion for him.

And the original word refers to the turning over of the intestines with feeling. When the father saw him coming from the pigsty, from afar off, he felt and he kissed him. He felt for him compassion.

And in this manner, he kissed him. This is a marvelous thing. It reveals the love that God has for the sinner, for the person who is deep in sin.

Maybe you feel nothing about the sin in which you are living, but God in heaven sees and he feels. He is hurt. He weeps.

The father, seeing him afar off, then ran to him. He is the one that ran to meet him. And then embraced him and kissed him.

We fathers, how would we react? I heard a father saying, if my son comes back, I'll kick him. I'll beat him up. I'll be really angry with him.

None of this however was evident in the father, the heavenly father. He fell about his neck, embracing him and kissing him. And it emphasizes that he kissed him much.

What does that show us? What does it mean? It depicts the love that God the father has towards the sinner. The sinner might have said, I don't know whether this will work out. But the reaction of the father shows the son his great love that he has towards him.

It is not like the kiss of Judas Iscariot. The kiss which is the kiss of betrayal. And of condemnation and of hypocrisy.

But it shows the love of God even towards the one who has come from the pigsty itself. I know this being embraced and kissed so much I know this being embraced and kissed so much showed him a love that he had never known before. The prodigal son with his filthy rags, with his terrible stench of the pigs, could not speak.

He was so overwhelmed by this love. We can come before the Lord Jesus with our sins, with all our wickedness, and humble ourselves. And then we experience the love of God the Father accepting us.

He came to his son. He was the one who met him, embraced him, kissed him much. Some find it so difficult to humble themselves and to confess their sin.

It is just too much for them. But if they come and experience God's love in this manner, they are encouraged. Then they freely want to deal with their sin and confess their evil.

And experience being washed by the blood of Jesus. Then we experience what it all meant that we were so far from him, so lost in our sin. We want to humble ourselves at his feet.

And that the Father should kiss him in this manner. He was expressing the fact that he no longer felt the pain of the act of the prodigal son leaving him. All the soreness the Father experienced in those years had been gone.

He had the assurance of forgiveness. And he just knew that all the sin that he had done was gone. All the wickedness of the old life had been erased.

And he knew that there was therefore no more condemnation. He knew that God had restored him. The prodigal son had gone to the Father.

Saying, Father, I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me just one of your hired servants. I have been lost, I have been deep in my sin.

Never did he go back to the old life, to the old sins again. He kissed him so that he would realize that he has been received like a son. We who are here today, I wonder if you have ever experienced that.

A certain girl who went astray. Many years she spent in sin. And after some years she returned and said, I'd rather die at home than die out there in my filth.

And indeed she withered away and died. She found her father had accepted her. And she said, Father, I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

I have been lost, I have been deep in my sin. You may have heard of the girl who died these days. The girl who had sinned with the President.

And then had fled the country. After England she was given a citizenship in Holland. And so she came back and she was buried yesterday.

Some gave her money. In one meeting she was given 500,000 Rand. But that didn't heal her.

Remember that your sin will catch up with you, for death is real, my friend. The wages of sin is always death. Let me come to the final point.

After this embracing of the father and him kissing him, he then said to the servants, take him and dress him in the best clothing. He didn't just say dress him. He said dress him in the very best of clothing.

Put a ring upon him. Put shoes on him. He then said to the servants, take him and dress him in the best of clothing.

Now it is only self-evident that the servants would have washed him first to get rid of the smell of the pigsty, like I told you about my experience as a child. The father said choose the best clothing and put it on him. And give him a ring.

Choose. And then bring him. And then the father had the fattened calf slaughtered and a feast was made.

And so great was his joy about the return of his prodigal son. Then along comes the older son coming from the fields. Hearing the sound of music and dancing, and he asked what is the sound I'm hearing? He said your younger brother has returned and your father is making a great feast for him.

Then the older brother was furious. He was angry with his father. And they came with the news to the father, the servants said your older son is angry with you.

He said bring him to me. He said son what is the problem? He said father this son of yours, he left, he squandered his wealth. He was with prostitutes, landed up in the pigsty and yet you do all this for him now? He said father I have worked faithfully all these years, I never deserted you and you never made a feast for me like this.

He said son all that is mine is yours. But this son was dead and now he has been raised from the dead. And now though lost he has been found and is back home.

He said son that is why I am so delighted and rejoicing. And the older son became the real prodigal. Instead of saying I will humble myself and I will identify myself with the joy of my father.

But he didn't do that. He was angry with his father and the action of his father. He said father I have worked for you, I have sweated, worked hard and not once have you made a feast for me.

How painful it was, the pain not from the prodigal but now the prodigal older son. When one studies the word of God there is so much that you can get, it is a mine of gold which you can dig in always. In fact I have only superficially touched on a few points, it is far deeper, more profound than what I have said.

You go and study it in depth, I would be thrilled if you would do that. Identify yourself with him, make yourself one with God that in his joy all the hosts of heaven rejoice over one sinner that repents. I would be thrilled if you would do that.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/lxLcE3omD7E.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/the-fathers-kiss/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net