

The Prodigal Is Still a Son

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and genuine faith in order to receive God's love and forgiveness.

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Scripture: Luke 15:11

Topics: "Repentance And Faith", "Eternal Destiny"

Description

This sermon by Shane Eidelman focuses on the story of the prodigal son, emphasizing the need for repentance, surrender to God, and coming back to the loving arms of the Father. Shane challenges the audience to consider their eternal destiny, the consequences of sin, and the importance of genuine faith marked by repentance. He highlights the reckless and unsatisfying nature of living apart from God, urging listeners to seek God wholeheartedly and find true satisfaction in Him.

Transcript

My name is Shane Eidelman. I actually pastor a church called Westside Christian Fellowship, where the Rosati's have been attending the last year and a half or so. And there's a reason why I'm not dressed up.

Michael said I didn't have to. So he said, just wear what you wear when you preach. And actually, after hearing Michael's testimony earlier in the week, I asked, why do I even need to speak? That was powerful in itself.

So thank you for that. And so Michael, I thank you for that. It takes a lot of courage, and we're proud of you to come up here and do that.

And actually, I've just got a few words to share. It's going to tie right into the prodigal story. But I'd be remiss if I ignored the fact that I know there's a lot of you tonight who have questions.

You have concerns, you have fears, you're not in the right relationship with God. And we want you to know that you are welcome in our churches. We love to answer questions.

I'll stay here till 10 o'clock tonight answering questions, praying with you, because this is actually the most important part of what takes place tonight, is where is your eternal soul? Where's your destiny? And when I'm given 40 minutes, I've got 40 minutes, if that, to speak to you. What would you say if you had 40 minutes? Many of you I will never see again, and I'm aware of that. And I'm going to say some hard things

tonight, but I make no apologies, because sometimes the church needs a wake-up call.

Our nation, especially, has been lulled to sleep with bedtime stories a lot of times from the pulpit. And we need wake-up calls. You guys need wake-up calls to sit up straight, wake up.

And sometimes when an event like this happens, there's no greater opportunity than to speak into your life, speak into your depression and your fears and your misery. Because I can relate to Michael's story, and I will get to that in a minute. But what I want to do is look at Luke 15 briefly.

I know some of you have your Bibles. If not, I'm going to read it. This is the story of the prodigal son that Michael was talking about.

And I want to just pull a few points from this. In context, as pastors, of course, we like to put scriptures in context. We don't want to pull out things and have it say whatever.

In context, he's talking about a son that goes wayward, prodigal, wasteful living. And the loving father drawing him back. But at the same time, this can be used as a wake-up call to all of us.

Where God's saying, listen, come home. It's time to come home. You've been running too long.

You've been messing up too long. It's time to come home. So with that setting, I'm going to read briefly.

Luke 15. Listen to this story. There was a man who had two sons.

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey into a far country.

And there he squandered his property and reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and he hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into the field to feed the swine.

And he was longing to be fed with the pods that even the pigs ate. But no one gave him anything. How can you go from notoriety and riches and wealth to now he's eating with the swine, feeding the pigs? That's the story of a prodigal.

Reckless living gets you nowhere, folks. It ends up in misery and despair. But then here's the good news.

But then when he came to himself, and that's interesting there, when he came to himself, he recognized the depravity and the sinful heart he had. And when he came to himself, he realized, oh, I've created this mess. I'm the reason for this demise.

I'm the problem here. He came to himself. It was a wake-up call.

And he said, how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. Those are some very healthy words.

I have sinned before heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.

And he arose, and he came to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion. And he ran, and he embraced him, and he kissed him.

And the son said to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, bring quickly the best robe and put on him.

Bring a ring and put it on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son who was dead is alive again, and he was lost and is now found. And a few points I just want to pull from this is the first point is you have to understand something that I think we forget, especially in the church, that the prodigal was still the son of the father.

You guys have to remember that, that the prodigal son was still the son of the father. And this is a challenge for any preacher, pastor, teacher, is I have to balance. I have to encourage, yet I have to warn.

I have to build up, but I must tear down. As much as we want to talk about God's grace and love and forgiveness, we cannot forget about his holiness and righteousness and judgment. See the totality of scripture is what makes sense.

Anytime you take God and put him off to one side or the other, you have a distorted view of biblical Christianity. And that's a hard job for a pastor because we want to encourage, and it was hard. It was hard.

This was probably one of the hardest sermons I've ever prepared because I know many people will leave here no different than when they arrived. It's in one ear and out the next. And we sing, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

The Lord is my shepherd. And you have to realize that not everybody can say that. Only those who've truly repented of their sin and embraced Christ can say that.

And that's one of my concerns is that we don't warn. We encourage and we encourage, but we never warn and say, listen, you're on the broad road to destruction. You've got to turn around.

Listen, how many, how many wake up calls do you think God delivers? He calls us back to him. And it's difficult because the Bible balances both love and grace and mercy, but also that there is a penalty. You see, I have to warn you, the Bible says that the wages of sin is death.

The wages of sin is death. That's not going to win me a popularity contest. I know a lot of people are going to be leaving going, oh, I really like what he had to say.

I realize that. But I have a biblical mandate to preach the truth. The Bible says the wages of sin is death.

The warning, but now the encouragement. The rest of that verse. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And it's not popular in many churches across our nation. You'll turn on the TV, you won't see this type of sermon preached very often. The wages of, telling people that we are eternally separated from God unless we repent of our sin and embrace Christ is not very popular.

It's not marketable. It's not palatable. It doesn't taste good, but it is powerful.

See, this is how lives are radically changed. That's what I meant by bedtime stories. We can't lull the prodigal son to sleep.

He needs a wake up call. And that's the first thing we see here, is the prodigal is still a son. And people say, of course, well, that's just what you believe, Shane, and there's many different paths.

And you know, I understand that, but the Bible is crystal clear. We just, many of us celebrate a resurrection day, right, Easter, Sunday, this weekend. And we look back in history, and God gave man the opportunity to accept or reject him.

Man rejected him. But God said, hold on, I'll provide a sacrifice. I'll provide a sacrifice.

And as we learn in the Old Testament, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. And that Christ came, the perfect sacrifice. What we just celebrated, I spoke to my congregation this weekend about how he was beaten beyond recognition.

He was spit upon, spit mingled with blood flowing down his clothes. He stood in front of his executioner, and as a lamb led to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth. He stood there.

But why? Because he had to take on the wrath and indignation of God to satisfy sin at that final point in history on the cross. You say, well, I don't believe that. It doesn't matter what you believe, folks.

It matters what is true, and your beliefs must line up with truth. Truth is absolute. Truth is not flexible.

Truth is not bending. Truth is not based on my opinion, your opinion. Truth is absolute.

And as Christ hung there, this perfect sacrifice, he actually wept before he went to the cross, and he said, Father, Father, take this cup from me. Take this cup. The wrath of God was about to be poured out on history.

He knew what he was going to go through. He said, Father, take this cup if there's any other way. Is there any other way? That's why I get upset when people say, yeah, there's lots of different ways.

No, there's no other way. Jesus himself said that I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes to the Father except through me.

Not through Hare Krishna, not through Buddha, not through this, not through that. For Jesus Christ, he is the only way, the only truth, the only life. And as he hung upon the cross for the sins of the world, he could feel the Father being separated from him as he cried, Eli, Eli, lama sabachini, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And at that point of history, your sin, and your sin, and your sin, and my sin was paid for.

See, I don't know why people get so upset. Oh, you shouldn't say that. Why? The price has been paid.

The price has been paid. That's good news. But you can't understand, but you can't understand the good news without the bad news as a backdrop.

How can I talk about God's grace, and his love, and his forgiveness if I don't talk about judgment, and holiness, and righteousness? That's why I love the good news, because I don't like the bad news. If I was God, I would not do things that way. And you have to understand something.

God doesn't send people to hell. Hell was created for the devil and his minions. And then once you say, God, I reject you, I reject your sacrifice, I reject everything you have to offer me, I'm going to go live with my father.

And we place ourself in eternal separation from God. We don't take the provision, the free gift. And you know why we know this is true? Because many people don't like what I'm saying.

And if you don't like what I'm saying, it's because you need to hear what I'm saying. God convicts us through the power of the Holy Spirit, convicting and drawing us back to him. And that's the first point there is we have to remember that the prodigal is still the son.

Don't forget that. The next point, the prodigal lives recklessly. The prodigal son lives recklessly.

Proverbs 13, 15 says, hard is the way of the transgressor. Do you know that sin is hard? That sinful lifestyle is hard. You guys, many of you, you don't have anybody fooled.

We know your life's falling apart. Your parents know your life's falling apart. Your friends know your life is falling apart.

That's why we say, here's the hope. Here's the answer. Remember, the prodigal living is reckless.

There's no good end to the end of the story. When you're a prodigal, when you're away from God, John 3, 20, everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. This is why many people don't like what I'm talking about, because it's exposing the darkness.

It's like shining a flashlight in the face of somebody sleeping. Get out of the way. Get Jesus Christ out of the way.

Get that light out of the way. I don't want to hear that anymore. Why? Because we're living in darkness.

We don't like the light of the gospel. But God says, I sent my light to deliver you. You must embrace it.

And that's why the scripture is so important. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds are evil. And this is why many people are running from God, because sin loves darkness.

This is why many people run from God. And I know what you're saying. You're probably saying, I'm in too deep, Shane.

I'm in too deep. You don't know my story. And Satan says, I've got you now.

I've got you now. I'm not letting go. I don't care what this bald-headed radical guy says.

You're mine now. And this is a part of the story of my sermon that I've been going back and forth with all week to take it in or take it out. You know, one of the hardest things about pastoring and just being in leadership and Christian leadership is looking back at your own past.

And I wish I could say that I graduated from the upper echelons of a university and I have a master's degree in church history and a PhD in theology, so you better listen to me and aren't I so special in my house, let's leave it to Beaver. But that's not the case. I can relate to Michael.

Crystal myth, eight balls, marijuana, beer, alcohol, steroids, all in the same night. I remember shooting up steroids, my thigh, my arm, getting drunk, going to buy an eight ball, snorting it. So I'm not here as if, how could you? I'm here saying, listen, there's hope.

God saved the prodigal son. I should be buried over in Lancaster now. I shouldn't be up here speaking.

I barely graduated high school, I had a reading and learning disability. And God says, I'm going to use you for my glory, but you got to repent and you got to return to me and the prodigal son comes home. So that's why sometimes I begin to weep when I preach.

It's not because I'm emotional, it's because I see how God can radically change a life. And that's why sometimes I get a little passionate because I want to wake you up. Your parents aren't the problem, God's not the problem, and church is not the problem.

The problem is our sinful condition, a sinful heart, the wages of sin is death. I remember the blackouts, I remember the regrets, I have many regrets. I won't share tonight, but I know an all-sufficient Savior, so I stand here as a living witness and just tell you what Christ means to me.

He is everything. When I was in my deepest despair, He pulled me out. When I needed a rock, a foundation, I built my life upon Him.

When my marriage was on the rocks, we went and we looked to Christ. When I'm trying to raise my children, we look to Christ every time we look to Him. He is my beginning and my end.

He is my everything. The third point here is the prodigal is never satisfied. You must realize this, Michael will agree, I'm sure, the prodigal is never satisfied.

The devil shows you the party, but not the hangover. He'll show you the high, but not the low. Isn't that interesting? Isn't that interesting? I know some people got high before they came here and guess where they're going to go after this service.

I'm not stupid. I played the same game. He shows you the benefit, so-called benefit, but not the end result of that.

So the prodigal is never satisfied. And if you're filling your mind with darkness, you will live in darkness. Romans 8, 6, the mind that is governed by the flesh is death, but the mind that is governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

A lot of you guys are filling your mind with nothing but satanic, these witches and vampires and the occult, and all this darkness. You wonder why God's distant. You wonder why I don't feel him anymore.

It's because you're filling your mind with things that directly oppose him. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. This boy was living with the pigs.

Do you realize that? Living with the pigs. A rich boy spent everything. Now he's living with the pigs.

The prodigal is never satisfied, and that's what the enemy does. Michael put it well. He kills, he steals, he destroys.

That's his mission. Your enemy goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. This guy's not a friend.

He's not somebody to be trusted. He's not somebody to play with. He's sent to take you down, and that's just the truth.

Now I was also going back and forth on this this week, but as a side note, we always talk about the prodigal, but I wanted just a quick excerpt here on the elder brother. The elder brother that we're not going to talk about just yet. He was arrogant.

He was judgmental. He was hard. He was callous, and it begs the question that there might be many here tonight that have the elder brother syndrome.

You are hard. You are callous. You are judgmental.

Let the love of Christ come in and wake you up. The kids are not impressed by how many scriptures we know. You realize that? But we can rule our house with a rod of iron, but we know nothing about the compassion of Christ.

It's alarming, and I've said this before, but I was--you listen to Josh McDowell many years ago. He said the number one question that young adults have, the number one question that young adults have is they say, how can we live for Christ when we don't want the Christ that our parents have? Wow is right. Right? How can we live for Christ when we don't want the Christ that our parents have? So I want to just talk about that briefly because the elder brother syndrome is an epidemic in some of our churches.

We become cold and callous and rigid and hard, and Jesus says, listen, I see your works, but you better return to your first love. You better come back to me. And then we go right into the fourth point, and I'll be out of your hair on the fifth point.

The prodigal son came to himself. This is interesting. This is--the message right here is for most of you guys right now.

If you're wanting to get up and leave, hold on. Just give me a few more minutes. This is going somewhere.

The prodigal came to himself. He said, I will rise and go to my father, and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.

God is your only hope. God is your only hope. Do you realize that? The drug dealer is not your only hope.

The next fix isn't your only hope. God is your only hope. And how do you get to that relationship? A beautiful word that nobody wants to talk about--repentance, repentance.

It's a change of mind that leads to a change of action. Lord, I repent. I confess.

I repent of my sin. Lord, would you take me back? I come to myself. I came to myself tonight.

I understand that I need a Savior, that I cannot do this on my own. And when the prodigal came to himself, this is foundational, because genuine repentance is always a mark of genuine faith. Show me somebody who has a genuine faith and belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and I will show you somebody

who has genuinely repented.

Somebody who has a shallow relationship, that could care less, they've never truly repented of their sin, because that's vitally important that we acknowledge. The Bible says, acknowledge your transgressions before God and repent of those things. And this is amazing, a king dying for me.

I talked about this on Easter as well, that this just literally blew my mind that a king actually died for me. My Creator died for His creation. I held my little baby the other day, one year old now, and God, He died for her.

He died for my children. God said, let me step down from eternity, let me provide the perfect sacrifice. All we have to do is accept it.

But what do most people do? Reject it. That's why this point is so important. And you might say, oh, that's just a fairy tale.

You ever hear that? Oh, that's just a fairy tale. Well, you better be sure. You better be sure.

This is not just a fairy tale. Many, many millions of people can attest to the saving power of God's grace. I can show you prophetically, archeologically, scientifically, and historically, why this is the inerrant inspired Word of God.

And as C.S. Lewis said many years ago, we all have to face this dilemma, either Jesus Christ was a lunatic, He was a liar, or He was the Lord. You can't have an option right there in the middle. You look at the scriptures and the purity of His words and the truth and the boldness.

Truth resonated from Him. He was not a liar. A lunatic? The grace minds in our nation cannot even fathom how He conducted Himself and how He did everything.

No, He's not a lunatic. The only other option is He's the Lord Jesus Christ, who He said He was. The reason He died was because He claimed to be God.

They said, oh, He claims to be God. We can't put Him to death, Rome, but you can. That's why He died, born to die for us.

And sometimes I get upset about it because it's in one ear and out the next. And you say, Shane, I've tried all that. I've tried all that.

It doesn't work. Listen, you don't try Jesus out as if He's a choice in a buffet line. You don't try Him out as the next drug that hits the street.

This isn't trying something out. This is fully surrendering our lives and saying, Lord, I need You. I give my life to You.

I repent of my sin. Will You take this pain away? Because eventually, life's going to spit you up, chew you up, and spit you out. That's one of the problems with being a young adult and why I didn't learn quick, because we think, oh, we're tough.

Right? I knew more at 18 than I did now. And I just kept that pattern up until finally God said, okay, enough, enough. And He continues to break me because it takes broken men to break men.

And He knows that. God will use, as much as we just so appreciate Summer's life, I know the Rosati family wants you to understand this, that as much as we celebrate her life, the ultimate reason for coming here and remembering is to make sure that you leave here different than when you arrived, that God grabs your heart and He saves you. That's the culmination of why we're here.

And finally, my favorite point, you might not think so, but it is. The love of the Father. Now there's two extremes in the church, that God is some mean, angry God, He's gonna throw lightning bolts at you as soon as you walk out that door, and you don't even know how you're sitting in a church, you can't believe it.

That type of God, right? And then what's the other type of God? This is doting, loving, grandfather, a cosmic ball of love, He just loves everything I do, right? Hollywood loves that kind of God. I can do whatever I want to, whoever I want, whenever I want, however I want, God approves it. He says no, it's right in the middle.

God is love, but God is just. God is a God of grace, but He's also a God of holiness. He's a God of mercy, but He's a God of judgment, and you pull all that together and you look at the attributes of God and they're powerful, but the one that stands among all the others is the love of the Father.

This is interesting, the prodigal spent everything, did his father get upset? Did he throw him a fit? Did he tell him, you know, you shouldn't do that? Did he lecture him? Did he discipline him? No, it's a loving father embracing him, the arms of the father were open. He was saying, come home, my son, my son that was dead, he's alive now, he's come home, let's celebrate, and that's the message really of the prodigal son is to come to yourself, to come to yourself, and God is saying, listen, come home. If you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me.

These are promises you can take God to the bank on. If you seek Him with all of your heart, not some of your heart, not just nuggets here and there, if you seek Him with all of your heart, you will find Him. God says, just come home, just come home.

Shane, you don't know what I've done. Oh, I can probably name it. You have to realize God cleans us up, we don't clean up ourselves, but Shane, I've aborted a child, I've had same-sex attractions, just come home, come home, but Shane, I'm high right now, I'm high right now, I've got drugs in my car, come home, come home.

I've been caught up in so much satanic activity and demonic activity, and I've been sleeping around, I've been stealing money from my parents, I've been all, yeah, me too, way a long time ago, not now, got to clarify that, but he's saying, come home. I mean, I would just jump up and down, if I could just do something, but it has to be God drawing you. Nobody comes to the son unless the father draws him, and it's through the, how do you think he's going to draw you? Write something up in the sky with airplane? Or send something in the mailbox? No, it's through the written word of God being preached with the power of the Holy Spirit into hearts, and the heart needs to break.

That's why we deliver difficult messages like this, because you can't coddle sin, you've got to crucify it. We've got to come and we've got to say, thus saith the word of God, turn from your sin, come back to a loving father, and he says, I will take you back. That's a wonderful thing, no matter what sin you've done, no matter where you're at now, it doesn't matter, God says, come home.

Would you come home? That's what this message really is about. It's our hearts, and I want to give people the opportunity, you need to really think about your soul tonight. There's no, there's not many ways to God, and somebody says, well, every way leads to God, and I say, yeah, that's true.

And before you catch your breath, let me finish. Every single path will lead to the judgment seat of God. Not to eternal, not to heaven.

Christ is the only way, the only truth, the only life. Nobody can come to the Father except through him. And God's invisible attributes are clearly seen, it's written in his word, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, everything is prompting us in that direction, so you have to come to yourself.

God says, just come home. So I'm going to conclude, and Ronnie's going to come up, he does worship for us at Westside Christian Fellowship. I'm just so glad he was able to come, but I want to pray with you guys.

You guys can go ahead and bow your heads. We're going to conclude in prayer. But I do want to ask, if there's so many people out here tonight, if you need to confess Christ as Lord, if you need what I'm talking about, if you don't have God tonight, just put up your hand.

You don't have to come forward, just put up your hand, and we'll just, I'll just acknowledge you. Is there anybody here tonight that needs God? It's time to come home. No more playing games.

It doesn't matter what the person next to you is going to think. This is about you and what you need. Anybody else? Just raise your hand, just let me see.

Don't look around, just keep your heads down. Thank you, thank you. Is there anybody else? I know probably half this room needs, I hear you, I see you.

Thank you. Thank you. Just pray, Lord, we need you tonight.

If you don't know Him, just repent of your sin tonight. Say, Lord, I'm a sinner in need of a Savior. I've drifted so far.

I need the loving hands of a Father to draw me back. Lord, I repent of my sin. I confess Christ as Savior, and Lord, I believe in you tonight, and you will be saved.

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