

the STRATEGY of *Jesus*
FRIENDSHIP GROUPS



Apostolic Assembly
of the faith in Christ Jesus

Seven Parables of Salvation

SEVEN EVANGELISTIC LESSONS
for *Friendship* Groups

By Arturo Ocegüera

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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Presentation



This is the fourth edition of our ***“Seven Evangelical Lessons”*** series, which are a part of the ***“Strategy of Jesus.”***

I thank Pastor Arturo Ocegüera of Oakland, California, for having accepted the challenge of writing these seven lessons, which are based on seven parables I have chosen for this.

In his parables, our Lord Jesus Christ would tell a story in which the listener would be able to seek for a lesson.

These are the parables of our seven lessons: *the lost coin, the lost sheep, the pharisee and the tax collector, the hidden treasure and the pearl of great cost, the sower and the seed, the wedding feast and prodigal son.*

These seven parables have divine transformational strength and are filled with the evidence of God’s inspiration.

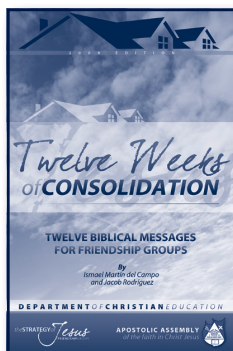
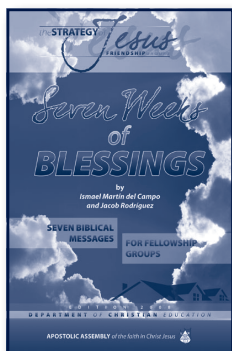
Once again, I recommend that you use these manuals according to the lesson cycle that will be explained in the diagram on the following page.

These lessons are doors of blessing to take new disciples to Jesus. The Master is calling men and women who are hungry for the presence of God, are worshipers in spirit and truth and fishermen for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Unleash the power of these lessons for God’s glory!

Bishop Ismael Martín del Campo

President of the *“Strategy of Jesus”* Committee



FIRST:

You obtain the booklet of evangelistic lessons:
7 WEEKS OF BLESSINGS

SECOND:

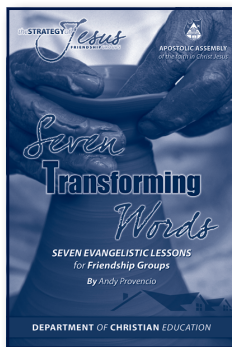
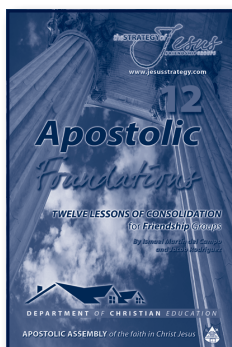
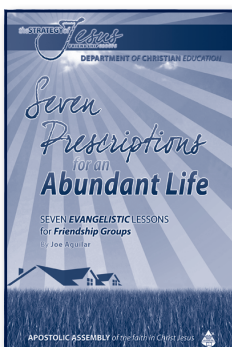
You use the booklet of consolidation lessons:
12 WEEKS OF CONSOLIDATION

THIRD:

You obtain the second 7 week booklet of evangelistic lessons:
7 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR AN ABUNDANT LIFE

FOURTH:

You use the second 12 lessons booklet of consolidation:
12 APOSTOLIC FOUNDATIONS



FIFTH:

You obtain the third 7 week booklet of evangelistic lessons :
SEVEN TRANSFORMING WORDS

SIXTH:

You use the third 12 lessons booklet of consolidation:
12 CHARACTERISTICS OF A CONQUEROR

SEVENTH:

You obtain the fourth 7 week booklet of evangelistic lessons :
SEVEN PARABLES OF SALVATION

EIGHTH:

You use the fourth 12 lessons booklet of consolidation:
12 FRUITS OF THE DISCIPLE

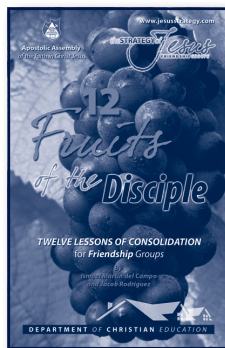
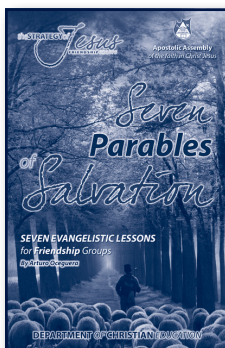


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Lesson 1

The *Parable* of

The Lost Coin



Ice Breaker: *Do you like stories with happy endings?*

Key Verse: : **Luke 15:8-10**

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? **9** And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. **10** Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.



Introduction:

This parable is a happy ending story like the lost sheep parable. Both illustrate God's surprising mercy for the lost and out-cast. Here the ruined soul is represented as a lost coin.

1. A marriage dowry

a. In Bible times, a gift or payment was made to the bride's father from the groom but the father would also give his daughter a gift. In New Testament times, the gift given the bride by her father often took the form of coins. Holes were drilled in the coins and they were strung together. The bride would wear them around her neck like a necklace or around her head as a headband. These coins were her wealth and she kept them during her marriage. If her marriage failed and she divorced, her coins represented her value. Thus, they were very important to her.

b. A lost soul is very important to God. Here, the ruined soul is represented as a lost coin. This parable teaches that God positively misses each lost soul. He longs for its restoration to its place with him and the work for which it was created.

2. The lost soul is something lost for God.

a. But why was it lost? Did the string that held them together break? Sin breaks the relationship with God. We "roll away" feeling guilty or to blame because of sin. We may not be



able to put our feelings of guilt or blame in words because we may not understand that guilt is the source of our discomfort. We express ourselves in anger, violence, depression and many other ways. But if Christ “reaches out to pick up the lost coin,” and you are the “lost coin,” then he is reaching out to absolve you of guilt and blame.

b. God rejoices in all his works, but particularly in the works of grace. He rejoices to do good to a sinner who has repented of his or her sins. When Peter finished preaching to the crowd on the day of Pentecost the Bible says that the people were, “*pierced to the heart*” (**Acts 2:37 HCSB**). This means they felt as if a sharp needle or instrument had punctured their hearts. It implies the idea of sudden sharp and severe grief because of their sins. Their question to Peter was, “What must we do?” Peter’s answer was, “*Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” (**Acts 2:38 HCSB**)

3. “When she finds it, *she calls her women friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!’”* (**Luke 15:9**)

a. The woman wants others to rejoice with her. The comparison is God’s desire for us to rejoice with him when lost souls are found. This type of rejoicing is the revival that all churches want.

b. The woman celebrating with her neighbors shows us God himself. God is rejoicing with his Church and his angels over the salvation of a single sinner. “*I tell you, in the same way,*



there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents." (**Luke 15:10**) The lost soul is of great value to God and all of heaven as it was to the woman of the parable.

Final Thoughts:

This parable has a happy ending with great rejoicing at the end. Do you want your life to have a happy ending? Is your life filled with guilt and blame? Know that Christ died for you that you might not be lost. Your life's end shouldn't be filled with shame and despair. A happy ending story will always be yours when Jesus Christ finds you.



Lesson 2

The *Parable* of

The Lost Sheep



Ice Breaker:

Do you think that God can become anxious?

Key Verse: Luke 15:4

(God Almighty doesn't get anxious. But speaking figuratively, in the parable of the lost sheep we find that God is anxious when one of his sheep is lost.)



Introduction:

A parable is a story or a saying that is intended to communicate spiritual truth by comparison. Lost sheep were images the Jewish community understood because there was much shepherding being done throughout Israel. Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep comparing lost sheep to lost souls. He did this because the Pharisees and scribes criticized him. He welcomed sinners and ate with them something they would not do.

“What man among you, who has 100 sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it?” (Luke 15:4 HCSB)

1. The Lost Soul

- a. **The lost sheep represents one who is not considered respectable by the Jews.** It is a lost soul and though only one is mentioned, in truth there are many lost souls. In the eyes of God, it indicates the value of a person's immortal soul and how anxious God is for it to be found.
- b. **It is very important that sheep not be allowed** to stray away from the flock because when by themselves they are utterly helpless. If they stray away they must be brought back. The Psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:176, “I wander like a lost sheep; seek your servant” (HCSB). Isaiah compared man's waywardness to that of sheep: “We all went astray like sheep” (Isaiah 53:6, HCSB). David sang of his divine Shepherd, “He restores my soul” (Psalm 23:3, NIV).



c. God has sympathy and compassion for the lost soul.

Sympathy is not merely sentiment or courtesy. True sympathy is working to help a person in distress. Likewise, compassion isn't simply pity for a person. Compassion requires a relationship and pity does not. The shepherd went to look for the lost sheep and when he finds it, he puts it on his shoulder and returns home rejoicing.

2. The straying sheep is restored.

a. (Verses 4-5) It is a principle of human nature that the recovery of an object in danger of being lost brings much more intense joy than having many that are safe. For example, we rejoice most in our health when we recover from a dangerous disease. We rejoice over a child rescued from danger or disease more than over many who may be in health or safety. We rejoice that the property is save from fire or storm, more than over much more that has not been in danger. Thus, the shepherd rejoices in finding the lost sheep. God has found the lost soul and is bringing him back to safety.

b. The shepherd rejoiced and craved for the sympathy of his friends. Jesus told his audience that he would have others share in his joy in finding the perishing, suffering sheep. God cares for the lost. (Verse six).

c. Even if men don't approve of God's compassion and sympathy, the celestial beings do. "I tell you, in the same



way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents." (Verse seven, HCSB) There is approval in heaven, which is far more important than man's because this is eternal approval. It means eternal rewards.

3. True revival is bringing the lost to Christ.

- a. **The shepherd brings the lost sheep on his shoulders,** not to the sheepfold, but to his own home—a place of honor and blessings.
- b. **Those of you who have turned from sin,** Jesus can use you for his greater purpose and fill you with blessings. Church, we must bring those who have strayed furthest from the paths of righteousness to repentance.

Final Thoughts:

Friend, do you want to participate in God's approval and in his blessings? Let Christ's compassion heal your inner wounds with love and forgiveness. Brother, your evangelistic work is greatly approved in heaven. Don't get discouraged in well doing because God is anxious for the lost.



Lesson 3

The ***Parable*** of the

*Pharisee and the
Tax Collector*



Ice Breaker:

Can you describe a humble person? Is it the way he or she dresses and acts or is there something else that makes you say he or she is humble?

Key Verse: Luke 18:9-14



Introduction:

This parable is the second of two that deal with prayer.

Verses 1-8 speak of the reward received in persistent prayer, whereas this parable speaks of proper and improper attitudes to prayer. Attitude is the way we think, act or feel. There is a proper attitude necessary in prayer for it to be answered by God.

The Pharisee belonged to a Jewish religious sect that believed that salvation came by rigidly obeying laws and precepts that they themselves and their forefathers had written. The tax collector was a Jewish officer of the hated Roman government who knew little or nothing of the Law, but longed after a higher life. He craved for an inward peace. These two went up to God's holy house, the temple, with a view of drawing near to the eternal king.

1. Can our works of righteousness be counted as a claim on God? (*Verses 11-12*)

The Pharisee stood so others could see and hear him as he prayed. He said he was not an extortioner (greedy/thief). He was not unjust in any of his dealings. He did no man any wrong and he was not an adulterer. Yet this was not all. He fasted twice a week, thus he glorified God with his body. Yet that was not all. He gave tithes of all that he possessed and so glorified God with his worldly estate. Yet God did not accept his prayer.

- a. **The root of spiritual pride** is the measurement of self by "other men." God is not in the thought. The mind looks around rather than above.



- b. The fruit of spiritual pride** is being religious but untouched by the emotion of a broken and contrite spirit. He trusts in himself as being righteous. He wants God to join him in admiration of his virtues, which he believes will lift him above other men.
- c. It would have been better for the Pharisee to say** the words of Elijah the prophet, "I'm no better than my fathers." (I Kings 19:4) He boasted he wasn't greedy, unrighteous, an adulterer or a publican but what of wicked thoughts which so often find a home in the heart.

2. What is humility?

It is not so much self-consciousness as a God-consciousness. It is not so much a mean thinking of us as a penetrating consciousness of him who is perfect holiness and truth.

- a. The tax collector smote his heart.** He felt God at his heart and God's holiness. This led for a longing to be holy and in turn, this longing called out the sense of wrongness of his life.
- b. The sinner's heart first smites him as he repents.** Isaiah, though a great prophet of God, when he saw God in his greatness and holiness cried out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). It is better to say of ourselves, "I am no better than..."

3. The blood of the sacrificial lamb cleanses from all sin.



When the tax collector said, “*God be merciful to me a sinner*” (**Verse 13**), the literal translation is **God be propitiation to me a sinner**. The word **propitiation**, which is translated as **mercy**, is a reference to the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant that was in the Tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the Temple. The high priest would enter once a year and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. It is the blood that turns the wrath of God away from the people’s sin. The tax collector cried out for this type of mercy that only the blood of the sacrificial lamb provided.

- a. The publican, standing far** off and not raising his eyes only strikes his chest. He only wants to pour out his heart before God. His attitude is upward, claiming for himself nothing. He is overpowered with the conviction of sin.
- b. The power of God’s grace.** God’s grace brought good out of evil. The publican had been a great sinner, and out of the greatness of his sin was brought the greatness of his repentance.

Final Thoughts:

It was good that the Pharisee was neither greedy, nor unjust but the devil made him proud of this and to his ruin. It was the tax collector that was accepted and justified by God. He was forgiven of his sins. It was the tax collector that found a higher life and the peace of mind he longed for and not the Pharisee. Do you want your prayers to be answered? When we are humble, we have chosen the proper attitude that brings answers to prayer. Will you turn your heart upward to Jesus? If there is something you need to ask forgiveness, know that his mercy is reaching out to you now.



Lesson 4

The ***Parable*** of the

*Hidden Treasure and of
the Pearl of Great Price*



Ice Breaker:

Have you ever dreamed of finding a treasure chest? What would you do with the treasure?

Key Verse: Matthew 13:44-46



Introduction

In this life we are tested for eternity. The test consists of conduct, character, and our faithfulness to God's rule on earth. ***"The Kingdom of Heaven is like..."*** refers to God's rule on earth. God's present kingdom is that sphere in which men and women acknowledge his authority. This kingdom exists wherever men and women choose to submit to God's authority.

1. The treasure is found by chance.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied." (Verse 44, HCSB) It was near to the man in the field without his knowing it. The gospel of John tells of a woman of Samaria who came out to draw water and met Jesus at the well. He asked her to give him a drink of water and thus began a conversation that led to her conversion and the subsequent evangelism of her town.

a. The field is the gospel and Jesus Christ is the treasure.

"Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field."

Jewish law of the time said that if a man found a treasure on the ground or in the soil, it would belong to him if he could claim ownership of the land.

b. Christ's salvation and his Holy Spirit bring great joy.

Finding Jesus is finding forgiveness of sin. It is finding a friend who listens when you pray. He is the treasured



friend you've longed for that will love you unconditionally. Finding this treasure is finding strength to withstand the struggles and failures in life, as also the triumphs. He is the treasure that provides a glimpse of heaven.

c. Self-denial is required to receive the treasure.

Complete surrender of one's will leads to total surrender of attitude, actions, plans and dreams. We no longer speak or act the way we used to, nor think like before. We enter into his kingdom where he alone reigns.

2. The merchant does not find the pearl by chance but is an earnest seeker.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls." The merchant is accustomed to deal in pearls and is seeking for good ones. His life is not aimless. He knows that there is a meaning and a purpose in this life and he aims to find it. Though he has pearls, he seeks for something better.

a. He is a religious person still seeking a deeper experience in God.

The Bible says that Moses, by faith, gave up the treasures of Egypt choosing to *"suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin."* (**Hebrews 11:25, HCSB**) Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus found Jesus and gave up everything for the Lord. He later wrote, *"Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ"* (**Philippians 3:8, HCSB**).



b. A true Christian is a spiritual merchant that seeks and finds this pearl of great price.

He is one who has long been searching for truth. Men seek goodly pearls such as riches, honor and fame. But Christ is the pearl of great price. He is the one needful thing; the good part that Mary chose while Martha was careful and troubled about many things (**Luke 10:42**).

c. If you're going to buy this great pearl, you must sell all you have.

You must learn to love the Lord with all your heart and to subject yourself to him. It means you must silence the earthly desires that call you and allow one strong desire for Christ to be heard in your heart. To such earnest seekers, the pearl of great price is given.

Final Thoughts:

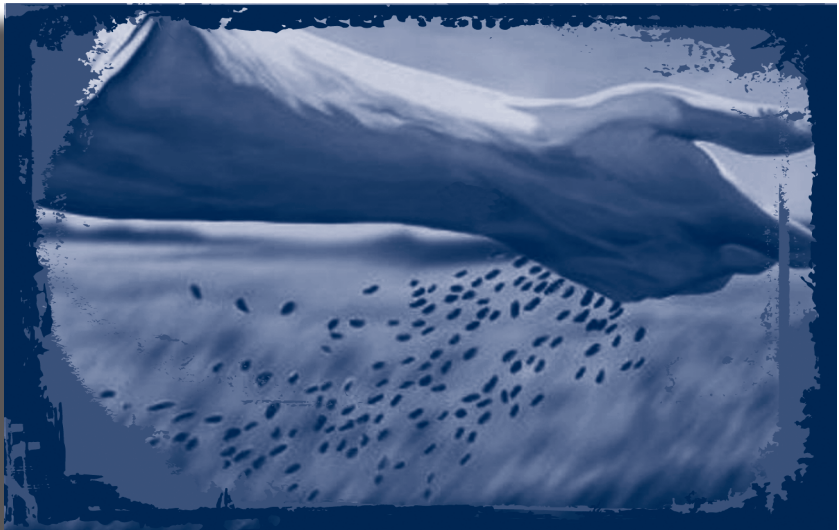
In this life we are tested for eternity. If we miss the opportunities of this testing period, we have no promise of a second chance. This is the time to surrender all to Jesus and receive salvation, the greatest treasure of all. Don't miss the opportunity of finding Christ Jesus during your lifetime. Choose to submit to God's authority and enter into his kingdom of mercy and love.



Lesson 5

The ***Parable*** of the

*Sower and the
Seed*



Ice Breaker:

If you have grown a garden, what were the problems you faced for your garden to bear fruit or vegetables?

Key Verse: Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23



Introduction:

Sowing, in ancient times, was the scattering of grain seed on the ground when planting a crop. The farmer generally carried a leather sack slung around his shoulder and took handfuls of grain, scattering them evenly on the ground. Later he plowed the soil to cover the seed. Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed gives insight into some of the **hazards** faced by farmers. The spiritual truth that this story conveys was that Jesus is the sower, the seed is his Word and the different types of ground are the hearts of people. There are hazards to people receiving God's Word.

1. To many it was nothing more than a story—**"Path" (Verse 4, HCSB)** It does not reach their hearts because of the hardness of the ground. It was where people walked making the pathway hard ground. The constant treading of the heart by worldly thoughts and cares and by selfish desires doesn't allow God's Word to penetrate the ground. They become **willing captives** to these thoughts, desires and values that are **contrary to God's nature and will**.

- a. **"But the natural man does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to know it since it is evaluated spiritually." (1 Corinthians 2:14, HCSB)**
- b. **"Birds" are evil spirits that come to take away the seed laying on the surface of the ground.** The enemy does this through wicked and selfish thoughts that keep people from doing God's will.



2. The heart unchanged, unconverted.

“Rocky ground” (Verses 5-6, HCSB) There was a thin covering of earth but underneath a sheet of rock. The seeds began to germinate but there wasn’t enough soil for the roots to get moisture and live.

- a. **These people easily get excited about Christ’s Word and receive it with joy.** But they haven’t counted the cost of the sacrifice the cross demands. Because there aren’t any deep roots, they do not have the capacity of real self-denial to their will and desires.
- b. **Such a person has no perseverance.** Affliction refines and strengthens the true disciple who is rooted in Christ. It offends the superficial Christian.

3. Almost was great—*“Thorns” (Verse 7).*

Diligent self-examination and prayer is needed to weed out the tendencies to worldliness. ***The soil is good*** and the thorn bushes had been burnt or cut off, but the roots of the thorn bush remained in the ground. The thorns sprang up again and the thorns took away the nourishment from the seed. The seed plant grew but there was no fruit.

- a. **These are men and women of character** but the cares of this world little by little fill their hearts. They think they have no time for Godly self-examination and prayer. It is when we have more cares in life that we need to spend more time in prayer. Whether money or pleasures of this life attract him, in the end there is no fruit.



- b. He doesn't have the fruit of the Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*).** He might have been something great for God but instead he gained the world but lost his soul.

4. What distinguishes the “good ground” is its fruitfulness

(Verse 8). Jesus doesn't say that the good ground has no stones or no thorns, but there were ***none that prevailed*** to hinder its fruitfulness. Saints, in this world, are not perfectly free from sin but are happily ***free from its reign***.

- a. The life of the true Christian is rooted in Christ.** Such a person does not fall away in time of temptation because his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. Nothing can separate him from the love of Christ.
- b. The honest and true heart is the good ground.** Even if you only bring 30 times, it will be graciously accepted by God. Bear fruit according to your ability and God's grace.

Final Thoughts:

There are hazards to people receiving God's Word but the Lord's people learn to love God's Word, the Seed. Evil passions and lustful desires have been subdued by the grace of God and His grace fills him with a new life. In whom this seed lives, he is transformed into the type of person Christ seeks and he brings forth fruit according to his ability and grace.



Lesson 6

The ***Parable*** of the

Wedding Banquet



Ice Breaker:

What do you like best of a wedding banquet? It is the food, the clothes worn, or the fun and laughter with friends and family?

Key Verse: Matthew 22:1-14



Introduction:

Remember that a parable takes common objects or events to explain spiritual truths. In this parable Jesus compares the story of a wedding banquet to the gospel message of salvation. The guests are invited to eat of the goodness of God, that is, pardon of sin, peace of mind, the comfort of the Holy Spirit and hope of eternity with Christ. The first invited guests refuse to come so the king has his servants invite others to come to his son's wedding banquet. Jesus and the apostles first went to the Jews with the gospel, but they rejected his message. The apostles then went to the Gentiles who more readily received the message of salvation.

1. Two types of people that rejected the invitation.

Verse three simply says they didn't want to come. This first type is indifferent to the gospel, careless to their need of salvation. They are too busy with worldly concerns.

- a. **There is plenty of food (Verse 4).** Again, the king sends his servants to the invited guests stressing that substantial food was prepared. The design was to fill every hungry soul with good things. There would be plenty of laughter and rejoicing, love and reconciliation. But, again, his invitation is rejected.
- b. **The second type of people was openly hostile** to the king and his messengers. John the Baptist was beheaded and the Jewish people took Jesus and crucified him.



- c. **Their unworthiness (Verse 8)** was proved by their rejection of God's gracious call. **Worthiness** consists in accepting God's call to salvation, *"Then Paul and Barnabas boldly said: 'It was necessary that God's message be spoken to you first. But since you reject it, and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles!'" (Acts 13:46, HCSB)*

2. Both good and evil

(Verse 10). The king sends his servants to go to the roads leading out of the city and invite all who are willing to come. Now there were many guests but it was a mixed multitude. Some after conversion prove that they are **evil** by their actions, thoughts and words. Others are upright and sincere, obeying God's Word.

- a. **Not all who accept the gospel are sincere.** One did not have on the wedding garment, that is, the right type of clothing for such a great affair. The wedding garment represents a heart and life that agrees with the gospel. *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires." (Romans 13:14)*

- b. **The king went into the banquet hall to see the guests.** In verse 11 the Greek verb that is translated to see means not simply to see casually, but to gaze upon with the intent of seeing the real nature and character of an object. We can only see the outward appearance of a man but God sees the heart.



3. How did you get in here?

(Verse 13). The gospel message must be taken seriously and obeyed completely. A carnal attitude and character is a great offense to the king and to the solemnity of the occasion. The Bible teaches there will be a reckoning when all will come before God in judgment.

- a. **Binding his hands** meant he could no longer do good to make amends for evil. Binding his feet meant he could no longer run to God's mercy. It was too late.
- b. **Utter darkness is hell, where the saving light of the gospel will never be seen.** It is nothing but darkness, pain, tears, rage, and despair for him who is not in the wedding banquet. This is the fruit of sin.

Final Thoughts:

Make a decision to be part of the wedding banquet. Accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and obey his commandments. The wedding garment is moral fitness. It is the way you live and conduct your life. A scrutiny will be made, whether in this life or the one to come and it will show if you have put on Christ. It will show if you have kept your soul pure, washed clean in repentance and in the blood of Christ.

"Let us be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. She was permitted to wear fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints." **(Revelation 19:7-8)**



Lesson 7

The ***Parable*** of the

Prodigal Son



Ice Breaker:

Have you ever been on a journey and realized you were going the wrong way and had to turn around?

Key Verse: Luke 15:24



Introduction:

This is the last of three parables that Jesus taught that illustrate divine grace. It tells of salvation whose key verse says, “Because this son of mine was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found!” (**Verse 24, HCSB**) The Pharisees, when they became aware of the great crowds of people, whom they looked on as lost sinners, listening to Jesus, they became inflamed with bitter anger. How could this new teacher say these sinful people could also win eternal life?

1. The younger of two sons represents a sinner left to the freedom of his own will and falling into sin and misery.

- a. **The younger son is in a hurry to be free** from the orderly, quiet home-life. “...where he squandered his estate in foolish living.” (**Verse 13**) Ungrateful to God and family and forgetting his duty, the Prodigal lived a wild, sinful life.
- b. **“After he had spent everything...famine struck” (Verse 14)** Selfish, evil living had gained him no real friends. He is left to meet the ruin of his fortune homeless and friendless. When sin begins to take someone down, he often finds himself without friends or means.

2. This is a true picture of the state of a lost soul, which, in despair, has yielded itself up to the Devil and his demons. “Then he went to work for one of the citizens of that country...” (**Verse 15**). People, caught in the vise-grip of sin, such as drug addiction, begin to do things that degrade them terribly.



- a. **Reduced to the lowest.** *“To feed pigs” (Verse 15).* For a young Israelite noble, trained in the worship of his people, to feed swine was to hit bottom. The swine had some value when fattened for the market, but he, the swineherd, **was valueless.**

- b. **“When he came to his senses” (Verse 17).** The Prodigal’s repentance was neither because of his sinful living nor soul hunger. It was absolute bodily suffering and cruel hunger that drove him to take the step, which in the end saved him. This may be a poor way of creeping into heaven, but it is better to enter heaven with a bowed head, than not at all.

3. His repentance was real.

“I will get up...” (Verse 18-19). It was no mere sentimental regret, nor a momentary flash of sorrow for a bad past. He had reached his turning point.

- a. **He had a long and weary journey ahead of him.** There was the shame of confession to family and friends and the position of servant to be filled. He who once had been a son, all he had to gain now was to be a servant.

- b. **If someone chooses to come back** from the sad country of sin, they will be welcomed *“...his father saw him and was filled with compassion.” (Verse 20).* The whole imagery of this part of the story tells us how gladly God welcomes the sorrowful penitent.



- c. ***“...fatted calf...because this son of mine was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found!” (Verses 23-24).***

The father quickly orders clothes, sandals, and a ring to assure the Prodigal of full and entire forgiveness. Christ desires to forgive you and to clothe you in righteousness.

4. The older son represents the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews, who were bitterly opposed to Jesus being a friend of the publicans and sinners. We have to be careful of our attitude when souls and backsliders are being restored. Do not let pride and self-righteousness blind you to Christ's desire to see all mankind saved.

Final Thoughts:

The Prodigal Son reached a turning point in his thinking when he reached absolute bottom. Though you may not need to reach bottom to make a decision to turn to God, all must make the important decision of turning to Jesus for salvation. The wonderful part of the story is that Jesus is waiting, continually looking for you to turn toward Him. He will then rush to meet you, forgive and bless you.