Luke 15:11-32 (Richard Mackewich) 168169

The Christian Shepherd: 2002, Eternal Son and the Prodigal Son, The (15:11-32)

Give Me

In Luke 15 we can see the heart of the younger son manifested by his demand, “Father, give me.” His heart was such that he could not wait for the inheritance that he would expect to receive upon the death of his father—he wanted it now.

Evidently he was not happy in his father’s house, though he came from a wealthy family. There was a longing for something that he did not have at home, and he felt that the answer was out in the world. How like our poor hearts, not content with what we have in Christ—just like the Israelites who said of the heavenly manna, “Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread” (Num. 21:5).

Perhaps we sometimes are not sure what we desire or if it is out there, but because our hearts are cold towards the Lord, we aren’t satisfied. The father, no doubt with an aching heart, yielded to his younger son and divided to him his living. Now the stage was set for him to travel to a far country.

Send Me

How unlike our precious Saviour when addressing His Father! In contrast to the prodigal, our blessed Lord Jesus was ever with His Father—“the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18). Proverbs 8:22-31 gives another lovely picture of that divine fellowship together. Yet in Isaiah 6:8 we have a glimpse of past eternity in the prophetic utterance: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” How sweet to our hearts is the response, “Here am I; send Me.”

Whose Will?

What contrasts we see between the Son and the prodigal! The prodigal went away in self-will; the Son of God always did His Father’s will. Our Saviour came willing to do the will of His Father—“I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29). Never was there one cloud of doubt as to the Son of (the Father’s) love in that eternal, divine fellowship.

Though the prodigal found it an easy path to leave his father’s house, it was not an easy pathway for our blessed Lord to leave His Father’s house. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Our blessed Lord’s journey was infinitely longer than the one the prodigal son took. But the eternal Son’s work was to do the will of His Father (John 5:30). “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9).

Grief and Delight

How the heart of the prodigal’s father must have sunk as he saw his son walking into the distance. The son’s place at the father’s table was now empty. What thoughts must have run through the heart of that dear grieving father’s mind: Where was he? How was he doing? What was he doing?

Yet consider what thoughts were in the heart of the Father when His beloved Son was crucified and “made . . . sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). The work of the Lord Jesus was to do the work of Him that sent Him (John 4:34). And thus in John 17:4 He could say, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” What satisfaction, what delight to the heart of God the Father. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Unlike the prodigal who was given the task of feeding the swine—which would have been a deep grief to his father—the eternal Son came to gather, guide, care for and feed the sheep (Psa. 23; John 10).

Joy, Feasting and Reward

What joy must have filled all heaven when the risen, eternal Son, as Man, ascended to the Father’s right hand! There was joy, too, in that father’s house when the prodigal returned—“they began to be merry.” There is no record of that joyful time ending, nor will there be an end to the eternity of glory and joy when we shall be found in the Father’s house, there to look upon the face of the blessed One who was “so marred more than any man.” His name will be in our foreheads (Rev. 22:4), and we shall see the wounds in that blessed side that secured forever our eternal blessing (Rev. 5:6).

The prodigal received the father’s kisses, the best robe, a ring and shoes for his feet. Our blessed Lord received the kiss of Judas, a scarlet robe of mockery and nails to pierce His hands and feet. But we shall see Him in that coming day of glory, “crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9), even as we see Him now by faith.

What an eternity of glory and rejoicing will be ours to share with our blessed Saviour! May our hearts give praise and worship to Him.

R. Mackewich (adapted)