

# Matthew

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[ 0 : 00 ] I count it a privilege once again to be among you a sacred privilege once again to speak in the Master's name I'm so well acquainted with the insufficiency and so well aware that without Him we can do nothing but prayer has been offered and our God is God answering prayer a hymn that's been sung that has blended so sweetly with some of the thoughts that have been in my mind now with our hope and our trust in the Lord we will look together into His Word now the subject for the lecture the parable sometimes known as parable of the prodigal son but as there are two sons involved it's perhaps as well to refer to it as the parable of the two sons well before I would seek to expand the parable itself

I'd like to make one or two remarks considering it I would like to say which I've no doubt been said many times already but perhaps it bears repeating that no parable stands on four legs in other words you cannot press a parable at every point and expect to find there the particular doctrine perhaps that you would like to find it it isn't to that end that the parables were spoke if the parable is not in itself a body of divinity but you will find as you look into the Word of God that the parable spoken by the Lord almost whatever parable it is arises from that which has transpired previously quite recently no doubt and in this particular case you'll notice the matter from that by which our

Saviour spake this parable in the first two verses of this chapter 15 then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him and the Pharisees and scribes murmured saying this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them and you can almost detect the sneer in their voice as they utter these remarks a similar remark made of course in the case of Zacchaeus when the Lord looked up Zacchaeus was looking down and the Lord invited him down come down this day

I must abide at thy house oh that all commanding word of our Saviour he made haste and cater but you'll notice the contempt and the sneer of the Pharisees in that case he is gone to be the guest of a man that is a sinner oh they meant it for evil but God meant it for good because it's been a comfort to you and it's been a comfort and still is a comfort to me he is the guest of a man who is still a sinner and God God oh Father it is who justifies the ungodly well no parable stands on four legs and then again notice the subject the cause whereby he spake it was the murmuring the sniding of the

Pharisees because he received sinners gladly yea and publicans and sinners yea received him gladly well there's a group of three parables in this chapter and it isn't time or our purpose to seek to expound them but you'll notice the first one dealing with the lost sheep the second with the lost coin third with the lost son well it's been suggested and I find it quite agreeable that in the first case it is God the son the shepherd that has lost his sheep it speaks of God the son seeking and finding the lost it is

[ 7 : 01 ] God the son inviting angels and all to rejoice with him because he spout the sheep he'd lost and and regarding the coin it suggested it is the holy spirit God the spirit seeking until he finds and again the same rejoicing and in the case of the lost son it is the father God the father seeking and finding the son that was dead and is alive again was lost and is found now there appears to be a difference between the first two parables and the third one but the difference is really only in the emphasis you see the first two seem to shadow forth so beautifully the loving concern of the shepherd the

Lord Jesus Christ the love of the Holy Spirit there and the father of course was the three old one are there yes their heartache their longings their desires over that which was lost seeking seeking until they find in the third parable the emphasis seems to lie rather upon the lost son in one sense as if it is he himself who as it were as it is written I will arise and I will go to my father yes the emphasis seems to be on the concern of the trinity in the first two parables you know this parable is often referred to as the pearl of all parables and no wonder because in this parable we have the

Lord Jesus Christ himself preaching the glorious gospel of the grace of God this parable is indeed the gospel we were singing something about drawing in various lines and here we have the great master the great master teach illustrating not with paint and brush but with those chosen living words that only he was given to water illustrating the gospel of

John 3 60 there we have it in words as it were in a brief text but he draws it out and illustrates it illustrating the love of God God is so loved and here he is showing us that so loving God seeking saving receiving a sinner yea typifying many sinners receiving them graciously lovingly joyfully to himself in

Christ Jesus yes he shows us God so loved and then he shows us the perishing sinner who shall not perish by believing the perishing sinner the younger son showing us his eager departure from his loving father and thereby manifesting the sin that already lay in his heart Jeremiah says my people have committed two evils they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and they've hewn them out systems broken systems that can hold no water he goes on to show us the degrading descent yea the beginning of that bottomless pit where every sinner that has severed himself from

[ 14 : 08 ] God must eventually find himself unless arrested by the grace by the love by the mercy obtained by Jesus Christ they restored again into the bosom and the love of the father that he had despised and was so eager to be free from restraint and then again the not so open sin but equally vile sin of the elder brother we find that self satisfaction with his own self imposed obedience that illegal righteousness that he's been going about about to establish we see him like no doubt we could notice in the

Pharisees disgusted by the love and the mercy lavished upon a penitent sinner at the same time repudiating the loving overtures of his father entreating him to come in and to share together with them the joy and the rejoicing of salvation so then the parable in itself shows the purpose of the saviour is to show the love of god the father and his readiness and his joy to receive to himself penitent the sinners well now just to look at the parable we find in verse eleven and he said a certain man had two sons a certain man well of course it is clear to all of us he is referring to the creator the father of mankind god we read in the acts god hath made of one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth and there he is it is remarked that we are all his offspring well needless to say when god created man in his own image male and female created him them it was in absolute righteousness and purity it was only after

Adam and Eve had disobeyed god after they had sinned their blood became as it were subject to the virus of sin working in the blood working death one blood all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth the virus of sin in the blood working death by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin for death hath passed upon all men for all have sinned and so it is there is no difference all are brethren in spite of what the Jews may think concerning themselves and concerning the Gentiles concerning the self righteous and the abandoned sinner all of one blood all sinners and this

God the creator lost lost lost his children through the entrance of sin but as we know God was now taken by surprise God had already made his provision in the covenant with his son but that isn't our subject tonight well we read a certain man had two sons well as we look into the parable we shall see they were sons in name but not sons in heart and so in verse twelve the younger of them said to his father father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me well in the beginning you notice his words well father give me but he doesn't end so well the portion of goods that falleth to me as if he had a certain right to them forgetting perhaps as so often we do that he brought nothing into the world and taketh nothing out he had no claim no claim and in any case if you look at it in another way it wouldn't have been fallen to him until the deceased of his father no there was an impatience manifest here an impatience to be away to be away from his father but taking with him all he could possibly get from his father he would be independent and of course to be independent of

God is the root of all evil of course this was the insinuating remarks of the devil to Eve you shall not die sever your relationship from God and ye shall be yourselves as gods realize yourselves lives you shall be like one of us he didn't say gods from beneath but that was what he meant yes that's the essence of sin the desire to be separate from

[ 23 : 47 ] God as I said my people committed two evils forsaken me the fountain of living waters healed them out cisterns broken cisterns can hold the father divided unto them his living he did not restrain the younger son a God forces no to abide in his love he watched the sun as it were degenerating into a servant he got all he could get but it was as it were only in a broken system it could not last and not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country gathered all together but the best he left behind a father's loving care and provision life yes not many days up is he again the impatience being independent of his father all together took his journey into a far country far country and do you know it's like that it's like that really with all sinners by nature we want and claim all that we feel is our natural inheritance good measure of health strength intellectual ability and the right environment whereby we may realize ourselves and make a name for ourselves and

God not in all our thoughts at least not in the right manner of thinking a preference a preference for the creature to the creator at a heart a searching the thought a thought a statement that I cannot see myself I'm altogether free of a delight in the creature in the blessings in the benefits in the gifts in the joys that God gives in a sense apart from himself but he never gives them apart from himself but we indulge in them so to speak apart from himself but God causes to grow in grace and in the knowledge of his son that he in all things has the preeminence so the sinner now free from any restraints and taken his journey into a far country no doubt saying to himself this is the life now

I am free now I'm independent now I'm alive but the father at home a lost this my son that is dead not alive dead in trespass dead in sins and so into a far country there wasted his substance with riotous living there's the down grave isn't it of a sinner first of all independence independence of God a departure from

God indulgence sensuality the self destruction if permitted and so we read he wasted his substance which of course was his father's not his happiness well we know riches have wings and they sooner fly away and tis pleasures there's no doubt about there is a certain pleasure attached to sin or men would not indulge in it no one would but it is pleasure it is the pleasures of sin but for a season followed by an eternity of misery as he wasted it riotous living and I understand it means not caring to save any portion whatsoever and it is sin that maketh men careless how swiftly he's come as it were to the end of what may have considered his substance his broken system no means of refilling he's severed himself from the fat and he's wasted his substance with riotous living when he'd spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want the way of the transgress there is heart and

God in mercy so often hedges up the way with thorns and it's noticeable that this famine was sent by God at the right time when he began to be in want this famine innocence the shepherd seeking a lost son I said no parable stands on four legs you cannot press it everywhere to find the doctrine that you hope to find or think you ought to find and perhaps it isn't wise to introduce something to which the

[ 34 : 00 ] Savior wisely omitted but may I perhaps because it's inevitable that one who is declared to be dead by the Father and totally lost could not as it were in any way return himself to his Father a lost sheep never seeks the shepherd and so there's a work unbeknown to him as there is a work of God unbeknown to every sinner whom

God would save by grace and that work is the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth and because this new birth this impartation of new life into the soul by God the Spirit takes place as it were in the subconscious no sinner is aware of the time when as the Lord put it is born from above he himself says the wind bloweth where it blisters you hear the sound thereof but you cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it cometh and so is every one that is born of the

Spirit it's a mystery it is known only by its effect you hear the sound you see the effects and it is so there cometh a famine not always a famine of bread but often time a famine of love a sense of loss a sense of dissatisfaction with that which you've been grasping after and perhaps in a measure have accumulated a famine can be an unwelcome guest at the table of a rich man it's not always a famine of bread but in this case we read and there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want but

I think the hymn writer put that sinners run as far as sheep can run from the shepherd and in a self determination to maintain as it were his own self by his works we read and he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country that far country he went and joined himself in other words the bricks have fallen down but I will build with hewn stone determined to self realization and perhaps once again to build up and accumulate that which he had wasted as in another parable give me time and

I will repay thee all but what do we find it was a citizen of that country who sent him in his fields to feed swine but there was apparently no wages apparently there was not even any bread he fain would eat fain had filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him we see the degrading descent of a sinner who severed himself from his father's love he's hired himself out now he wanted his independence once he was a son now he's the bond slave of sin and hired himself out for bread but that isn't the wages the wages of sin is death perishing with hunger should not perish but have everlasting life yes his fellowship now is with swine eating swirly out of the swine trough yes these are both strokes in the illustration of the downgrade of a sinner severed from

[ 41 : 23 ] God but it is drawn by the master because he knoweth what is in man and now he sought to work his way no breath death staring in the face so he begins to beg beg from those who shared with him now this downward marches but no man gave it no man gave it it reminds us doesn't it of Sanhedrin and Judas Iscariot they encouraged him in his sin and when he discovered the awfulness of his sin he went back and said

I betrayed innocent blood and threw the money down before he said what is that to us is out of that response of the devil response of sinners to sinners but you see there's a work a work going on in his heart only God could have planted there for there's a multitude of sinners in the far country of which we do not read that they came to themselves verse 17 when he came to himself what does that mean well to my mind it means he saw himself know for what he really was as it says in another place when the spirit is come he will convince of sin and now this young man is convinced of his sin and something of the awfulness the vileness of that sin and like

David against thee his father against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight he spurned the love of his father it's the greatest sin he wasted his father's substance but that work is going on came to himself conviction of sin but conviction of sin is not conversion but it's often a prelude to it

I will arise when he came to himself how many hired servants of my father have bread enough to spare and I am perishing with hunger God so loved and this is what our saviour is bringing out in the parable God the father so loved he spared not his own son but whosoever believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life I will rise no doubt he beat on his knees not now to the fellow citizens of that far country not now seeking to satisfy himself with that which the swine did eat and you see there you may say the husks that many sinners seem to continue with those husks that may fill for a while but never satisfy sensuality however old one may become

I know the word says flee youthful lusts doesn't only apply to youth if a sinner isn't saved by grace those sensual lusts covetous desires are as rampant in his heart as any youth they may feel they may feel they don't satisfy and the cry is for more for more and to add fuel to the fire only increases in the fire and where the fire is not quenched and the worm dives not it is the beginning of a lost sin but hear this grace

[ 47 : 58 ] I will arise I will go to my father and I will say unto him I will arise off his knees no doubt no doubt he's already praying no doubt he's looking again to that face of this father when he said goodbye to him and saw that tear in his father's eye that love manifest oh that reawakening of that love that he spurred I will rise and I will go to my father and I will say unto him father I have sinned against heaven before thee

I am no more worthy to be called thy son make me one of thy hired servants oh how as it is sometimes said how shiny eye how the law of works still lingers even where grace is already about make me a hired servant I will I will show you I will do something I'll do something in the future to merit thy love to me no no and he arose and came to his father but when he was a great way off his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him now saviour no man knoweth the father but the son and he to whom the son will reveal him and it is here the son is revealing the love the compassion the tender mercy of God the father to a repenting sinner yes he well he was a great way off saw him had compassion ran fell on his neck and kissed no doubt the prodigal returning with a slow step perhaps questioning still in his own heart perhaps the devil as it were that he said to resist as he said at the beginning you shall not surely die but now he said you shall not surely live you've sinned yourself to my servant but but he will not listen he goes he makes his way his father meets him ran and fell on his neck the prodigal has stood the father running oh more ready to hear more ready to give forgive than any sinner can ever be to ask and having received that kiss of reconciliation it doesn't say for how long the embrace lasted but you can imagine it wasn't just a moment there may be of nothing said but a multitude of love overflowing and exchange do you see the grace of

God is such that it maketh the sinner long for the grace of the father and the father waiting to be gracious what an embrace yes reconciliation before ever he can bring forth as it were his words of confession and he makes no secret about it he calls sin sin father I've sinned against heaven and in thy sight I'm no more worthy to be called to thy son make me no he doesn't he can it's not possible that last vestige of legalism has been swept away by everlasting love there are no servants no servitude in heaven no no or sons the sons by adoption by the spirit of adoption so we must hasten the father says to his servants bring forth the best robe put it on him put a ring on his hands shoes on his feet the father it seems would have it known to the servants that mercy and that grace and that love and be it remembered were it not for fallen sinners redeemed by the precious blood of

Christ constrained and led by the spirit back in repentance that grace in the heart of the eternal would never have been manifest in the way that it is even to angels the grace of God is manifest to the angels and principalities and powers by the church being received again by love by grace through faith which is still the gift of heart so then is it not the robe take the filthy robe off him we do not read it here you cannot press it at every corner but you can read it elsewhere bring forth the best robe is it not the righteousness of

Christ I think it well may be a ring put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet to slaves that went barefooted in the house so he's no longer a slave he's been made free and he's free indeed restored again into the loving heart of his father bring hither the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be married for this my son was dead and is alive again he was lost but is found and they began to be married there was joy and rejoicing here again joy and rejoicing in heaven over one sinner repenting now the elder son was in the field and as he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dance and he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant he didn't call his father he didn't seek out his father he didn't say father what's all that's going on there was not that relationship he calls a servant and asks the servant why the celebration and the servant seems to have more grace in his heart than the elder brother thy brother has come thy father has killed a fatigued calf because he has received him safe and sound no doubt this is as a servant would see it this young man has returned in a reasonable health safe and sound but the father saw him differently he was dead he's alive again he was lost and is found but the elder brother he was angry and would not do him therefore came his father out and entreated him again

[ 58 : 51 ] God would not that any should perish but that all should come to repentance he came out and entreated him and notice oh the heartless cruel way in which this self righteous Pharisee well he answering said to his father lo these many years do I serve thee you see the spirit of servitude here is a son and his father is a wealthy man the house is filled with servants there was no need for him to be laboring and serving in a slavish manner in the fields lo these many years do I serve thee neither transgressed at any time thy command no maybe it didn't as touching the law blame us but no love love is the fulfilling of the law oh it's possible it's possible to give our bodies to be burned and have not love it profiteth nothing we may speak with tongues of men and angels sounding brass without love oh there'll be many that day will say have we not done many wonderful works and in thy name cast out devils depart from me

I never knew you it was all for their own attainments in a self righteousness and did they but know it always and throughout all their laboring in the sight of God it was filthy rags yea in scripture uses even stronger language than that many years by so neither transgress by any time they come out thou never gave me a kid that I may make merry with my friends my friends not with my father my friends there's little difference then you see there is this smear this jibe but as soon as this thy son not my brother he doesn't even recognize him but as soon as this thy son was come which hath devoured thy living with harlots thou skilled for him the fatted calf

I've never had a kid as if to suggest that what the father had done for the younger son had in some measure robbed the elder brother of something oh as if god love one repentant sinner could in any way impoverish another nay god in one sense enriches himself by receiving penitence sinners shedding his love abroad in their hearts no they love him because he has first loved them no god is not impoverished in any way by lavishing his love mercy and blessings upon any so he said so

I'm not ever with me and all that I have son doesn't say all that I have thou shalt have you see it was his as it were in his father but he was severing himself from it by his attitude oh yes it's all his it so far but until that time then it is no more but in the meantime it was and god would have him to know it the father would have him to know it come in come in come in in repentance now it doesn't say it was meet that we should make merry and be glad but this you see the father will say this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found and so then do we not see do we not see ourselves here perhaps in the first place was a sinner severed from god and I trust in the second place a sinner saved by grace and brought again to our heavenly father to share and enjoy the joy of himself for he rejoices with singing over every returning sinner and continues to do so yes I trust we see ourselves there but is there not sometimes we mustn't absolutely confine the elder brother to

Pharisees there's something of us something of it in in my heart perhaps in your heart I don't know but is there not sometimes an envy perhaps a jealousy perhaps of a another servant of god who we see god using in a remarkable way and who seems to have a joy in god that perhaps I have never yet experienced there's a sense of envy there there's something of the elder brother still lurking in the walls of this mud walled cottage so to speak but may god grant us each that deliverance from it but then this parable this teaching of our saviour

[ 66 : 46 ] I say it doesn't stand on four legs you cannot press it at every point and no doubt the saviour had no desire that we should do you see there are high doctrines there's the doctrines of the sovereignty of god there's the doctrines of predestination there are the doctrines perhaps of the covenant they're not brought in but what is emphasised is the love of god in receiving sinners and supposing that elder brother had met the younger brother before he saw his father he may have proved a stumbling block may we never prove a stumbling block to a seeking sinner however he may prove a stumbling may we never prove a stumbling to a stumbling to a seeking sinner