

THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN **(Luke 15:11-24)**

I. He does not restrain his son from leaving.

- A. When the son asks for his inheritance in order to leave, the father does not try to stop him.
 - 1. It was a slap in the father's face for the son to ask for his portion of the inheritance.
 - 2. It meant he wanted his father dead so he could collect what was coming to him.
- B. I am sure that the father wanted to beg the son to stay, or to ground him so he couldn't leave, or bribe him somehow to stay.
- C. This isn't what the father did.
 - 1. Apparently, the son was of an age where the father could not keep him if he wanted to go.
 - 2. Therefore, he let the young man choose what he wanted to do.
- D. God does this today for us as well.
 - 1. God doesn't make us stay with Him against our will.
 - 2. Calvinism has God forcing people into being His children.
 - 3. They go so far as to say that people have no choice in the matter.
 - a. Unconditional election teaches that people are chosen to be Christians with no say so in the matter.
 - b. Limited atonement teaches that Jesus did not die for everyone, only those unconditionally elected.
 - c. Irresistible grace teaches that once you are chosen you cannot resist God's grace, you are saved whether or not you want to be - it doesn't matter how good or bad you are.
 - d. Acts 7:51 states that there were those who did resist the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. Calvinism can be pictured as a man tied to a chair with the Lord telling him to come to Him but not being able to do so.
- E. Joshua long ago told the Israelites that they had a choice (Joshua 24:15) and they had been told this before by Moses (Deuteronomy 30:19).
- F. Notice what Paul told the Romans (Romans 6:16).
- G. God wants our service to Him to be out of love.
 - 1. If we have to be forced to love Him, it is not truly love.
 - 2. John 14:15.
- H. This also shows that the tenet of Calvinism called perseverance of the saints, better known as once saved, always saved, is false.
 - 1. This boy chose to leave the father.
 - 2. The boy represents Christians and the father represents God.
- I. The father could have restrained his son, but did not and God won't restrain us either.

II. God's love is exemplified in his longing for the return of his son.

- A. I doubt a day went by with that father not looking down the road, hoping and praying that he would see his son walking down it.
 - 1. As a parent, I could not imagine what it would be like to have a

- child go into sin and not know where he was or what he was doing.
2. It must be an extremely difficult thing with which to deal.
- B. Just as that father longed for the return of his son, God wants His spiritual children to return to Him.
- C. God doesn't give us "thou shalt's" and "thou shalt not's" to make us miserable, but because He loves us.
1. God knows what is best for us and how easily we can be hurt by the world.
 2. God wants us to live good lives and enjoy the life that He has given us.
 3. However, there are times when we wander out into that country of sin.
 - a. Sometimes we picture sin as a far-off country because this young man was said to go into a far country.
 - b. However, we need to remember sin is not far from any of us.
 - c. God told Cain that sin was lying at his door (Genesis 4:7).
 - d. We don't need to act like it is something far away from us, but that it is near and we need to be on guard against it.
 4. When we do wander off, God longs for us to come back.
 5. That is the point of the whole 15th chapter of Luke.
 6. There was rejoicing when the lost coin and the lost sheep were found.
 7. Jesus said that when a child of God's returns, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:10).
 8. This means that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all rejoice when an erring child returns.
- D. Some people come back on their own, like the prodigal, but others need to be sought after by their brethren (Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20).
1. The prodigal who had a brother who should have gone looking for him.
 2. We must go after our spiritual brethren who have fallen away.
 3. I believe this is part of what Paul means when he said to bear one another's burdens.
- E. In Revelation, Jesus is pictured as knocking at the door and only we can open that door.
1. He will not break down the door and force His way in.
 2. But, He will keep knocking because He wants us to let Him in.

III. God's love is exemplified in his restoring the son to his original position.

- A. Notice how the father acts towards his son.
- B. Everything but what he spent is restored to the son.
1. The shoes and the ring are given back.
 2. The clothes are given back to him - no longer wearing the clothes of a slave.
- C. The same is true for the erring child of God who comes home.
- D. Again, notice it is not said that he would receive his inheritance again.
1. This shows that even though we can be restored, we still have to

- live with the consequences of our sins.
- 2. We must still reap that which we have sown physically.
- 3. It may be a criminal sentence, an unwanted pregnancy, debt or any number of things.
- E. There are so many spiritual blessings associated with being a child of God and all are restored (Ephesians 1).