

The prodigal son, his wickedness and distress.

The Parable of the Lost Son

Luke 15:11-31

The parable of the prodigal son shows the nature of repentance, and the Lord's readiness to welcome and bless all who return to him. It fully sets forth the riches of gospel grace; and it has been, and will be, while the world stands, of unspeakable use to poor sinners, to direct and to encourage them in repenting and returning to God. It is bad, and the beginning of worse, when men look upon God's gifts as debts due to them.

The great folly of sinners, and that which ruins them, is, being content in their life-time to receive their good things. Our first parents ruined themselves and all their race, by a foolish ambition to be independent, and this is at the bottom of sinners' persisting in their sin. We may all discern some features of our own characters in that of the prodigal son. A sinful state is of departure and distance from God. A sinful state is a spending state: wilful sinners misemploy their thoughts and the powers of their souls, mispend their time and all their opportunities. A sinful state is a wanting state. Sinners want necessaries for their souls; they have neither food nor raiment for them, nor any provision for hereafter. A sinful state is a vile, slavish state. The business of the devil's servants is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, and that is no better than feeding swine. A sinful state is a state constant discontent. The wealth of the world and the pleasures of the senses will not even satisfy our bodies; but what are they to precious souls! A sinful state is a state which cannot look for relief from any creature. In vain do we cry to the world and to the flesh; they have that which will poison a soul, but have nothing to give which will feed and nourish it. A sinful state is a state of death. A sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, destitute of spiritual life. A sinful state is a lost state. Souls that are separated from God, if his mercy prevent not, will soon be lost for ever.

The prodigal's wretched state, only faintly shadows forth the awful ruin of man by sin. Yet how few are sensible of their own state and character! (Lu 15:17-24)

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