

The Father and the Elder Son

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this morning and as we come together around the Word of God, let us seek His blessing upon His Word. Let us pray. Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, we give Thee thanks this day that we have been brought together under the hand of Thine own providence into this place.

And as we come together seeking to worship Thee, we ask that it may please Thee to grant to us of Thy Spirit to enable us to worship Thee in a way that would be acceptable to Thee, in a way that would bring praise and honour and glory to Thy own name.

For we acknowledge, O Lord, that without Thee we can do nothing. We acknowledge that we are dependent upon Thee, dependent upon Thy Spirit to lead us into Thine own truth, to enlighten our understanding and to open our hearts to receive Thy Word.

And we pray that as Thy Word goes out today, not only among ourselves, but throughout our islands and throughout our land, and even unto the ends of the earth, that it may be accompanied by Thy Spirit.

For it is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing. And so we pray that it may go forth in the power and demonstration of Thy Spirit, in convicting and in converting, and in the upbuilding of Thine own Church.

[1 : 5 7] We come before Thee, O Lord, mindful of who Thou art, that Thou art the High and Lofty One, that Thou art the One that inhabiteth eternity, that the heavens are Thy throne and the earth Thy footstool, that Thou art a holy God.

And as we come before Thee in this act of worship, we pray, O Lord, that we would come with reverence and with godly fear. We pray, O Lord, that Thou would bless our communities, that Thou would bless our homes and our families.

Thou knowest our needs. And we pray that we would come and lay out our needs before Thee, knowing that Thou art the one who is able to meet with each one of us at our point of need.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for the riches of Thy grace. And as it has been revealed to us through Thy Son, we give Thee thanks for the sending of Thy Son and for delivering Him up to the cross of Golgotha, there where He stood in our room and in our place, in the place of all those who will put their trust in Him, who will draw near to Him by faith.

There He endured what we, our sins, deserved, making a way for us to the very throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

[3 : 4 7] We thank Thee, O Lord, that today we can come with all boldness and confidence to that throne and seek Thy mercy based on the finished work of Thy Son on the cross of Golgotha, that we come not with any merit of our own, but that we come in the merits of the One who died and who was buried and who rose again and who is at Thine own right hand, where He ministers on behalf of His people, where He intercedes for them.

Thine own beloved Son, our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for all the tokens of Thy goodness and kindness to us.

Remember those who are ill. We pray that Thou would bring healing to them if that be in accordance with Thine own sovereign will. Remember those who mourn.

We pray that Thou would be a comfort to them this day. Remember our young people and our children, so many things to entice them away from the Gospel.

But we pray that it may please Thee to raise up a generation that would fear Thy name, a generation who would be Thine own witnesses in this world.

[5 : 17] We pray, O Lord, for all assemblies of Thy people this day and for all Thy servants who proclaim Thy word.

We pray that they may know the unction of Thine own Spirit upon them. We remember, O Lord, the beginning of a new ministry in Garibus within our own Presbytery and we pray, O Lord, Thy blessing to be upon them as a congregation and as upon the newly inducted minister that he may know, O Lord, the unction of Thine own Spirit upon him as he proclaims Thy word and as he goes in and out among the people.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for all Thy goodness and kindness to us, reminding us, O Lord, that Thou art a faithful God and it is because of Thy faithfulness that we are not consumed.

For if Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark our iniquity against us, there is none that could stand. But if we confess our sins, the word faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we pray, O Lord, that we would come in truth before Thee at this hour in confessing our sins, in acknowledging our sinnership, in acknowledging our great need of the cleansing that Thou alone can give, as we give thanks for the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 04] We give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, for Thy faithfulness towards us, for Thy lovingkindness towards us. And we pray that as we now come to wait upon Thee, that it may please Thee to presence Thyself with us through Thy Holy Spirit.

And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins is in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Luke, and 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 he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it.

And when he hath found it, he layeth in a foolish rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

[8 : 25] I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. 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.

And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the peace which I had lost. Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And he said, a certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that followeth to me, and he divideth unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began to be in want.

and he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him.

[9 : 45] And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father shall have bread enough and to spare and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.

And I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it and let it sit and be merry.

For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found and they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field and as he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant and he said unto him, Thy brother is come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound.

[11 : 03] And he was angry and would not go in therefore came his father out and entreated him. And he answered and he said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends.

But as soon as this thy son was come which hath devoured thy living with harlots thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should make merry and be glad for this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found. May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word and seeking his help and blessing.

Let us read again from verse 25. Now his elder son was in the field and as he came and threw nigh to the house he heard music and dancing and he called one of his servants and asked what these things meant and he said unto him, Thy brother is come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry and would not go in therefore came his father out and entreated him and he answered and he said to his father lo these many years do I serve thee neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I may make merry with my friends.

[12 : 36] But as soon as this thy son was come which hath devoured thy living with harlots thou hast killed for him the fatted calf and he said unto him son thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine it was meet that we should make merry and be glad for this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

Today we come to the final part of the story in this three part parable or maybe we should say a four part parable.

We have the shepherd we have the woman we have the father and the younger son and we have the father and the eldest son.

The first three parts brings before us something that is lost and found and there is much rejoicing. However in the final part there is also something that is lost but the conclusion of this part of the story is open ended.

Let us again reflect on the context. 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 he spake this parable unto them.

[14 : 05] Jesus is speaking to those who were deeply offended that he associated himself with publicans and those whom they regarded as sinners that is those who did not keep the law in the way that the Pharisees and scribes did.

In other words they were religious outsiders. But Jesus always seemed to attract religious outsiders and that is one of the reasons that the religious elite like the scribes and the Pharisees found fault with him and complained about his ministry.

and Jesus begins the parable by speaking to them about a shepherd who lost one sheep out of a hundred and left the ninety-nine in the wilderness and went on a mission to seek the lost sheep and searched until he found the sheep and brought the sheep home and then invited his friends and neighbours and there was a great rejoicing.

Why did Jesus use the imagery of a shepherd seeking his lost sheep in this first part of the story?

Well I think it was because of his audience that this imagery of a shepherd is quite deliberate. Shepherds were outcasts who did not enjoy a good reputation in their day.

[15 : 40] Because they lived out in the fields they were unable to keep the ceremonial law and thus they were treated as unclean.

They were regarded as liars and thieves and their testimony was excluded in a court of law. Shepherds were very much a despised class.

Probably next to lepers they were among the lowest class of men in Israel. And Jesus begins the story in the audience of Pharisees and scribes and speaks of this despised person who goes out seeking after that which is lost.

Jesus of course is speaking of himself as the shepherd whose mission was to seek and save the lost. he is bringing to his audience the nature of his mission.

He is saying to them you are despising me just as you despise the shepherd. But the good shepherd seeks the lost sheep until he finds it and then he and his friends and neighbours rejoice.

[16 : 58] promises. in the Old Testament which the audience would know very well how often we find the Lord accusing the religious leaders of the day as shepherds who scatter the sheep.

Read Ezekiel chapter 34 it is a chapter that is worth reading. And there we find that the Lord promises behold I even I will both such my sheep and seek them out.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among the sheep that are scattered so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day and I will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries and will bring them to their own land and feed them upon the mountain of Israel by the rivers and in all the inhabited places of the country.

You see here there we can say that we can look upon the Pharisees and the scribes as so sure scattering the sheep but here is a shepherd and he will gather the sheep together.

well I wonder how the audience felt as he was telling them the story about the despised shepherd his mission and the success of his mission.

[18 : 30] Then there is the story of a woman who lost a coin out of ten and searches until she finds the coin and again there is much rejoicing.

Why did Jesus use a woman in this part of the story instead of a man? I think again because of his audience he did this quite deliberately.

Within the context of cultural and the social norms that persisted in the days of Jesus women played an extremely limited role.

For instance in the Roman Empire men ran society. Only men were active in politics and culture. And in a Jewish society Jewish women were not educated in the Torah.

In fact it was one of the laws of the rabbis that said the words of the law be burnt rather than taught to a woman. In fact the Jewish rabbis were especially opposed to interacting with women.

[19 : 40] men. But Jesus acted differently. He interacted with women. For instance we have the story of the woman of Samaria.

We have Mary and Martha of Bethany and many more. And in the eyes of the Pharisees and scribes Jesus by interacting with women was making himself of no reputation.

but here in the story that he says before the Pharisees and the scribes the woman sought the coin until she found it and rejoices.

Again I wonder how the audience felt as he was telling the story of the diligent search of the woman for the coin until she found it.

Women whom they looked down upon and yet here is the story of a woman who makes a diligent search for the coin until she finds it.

[20 : 45] Then there was the story of the son who wanted a part of the father's inheritance and after receiving it squandered it all and ended up working with pigs.

And according to the law of Moses which the audience knew well, swine or pigs were ceremonially unclean and the thought of a Jewish boy feeding pigs were unthinkable.

Again I just wonder how the Pharisees and scribes that were present as Jesus told the story reacted when they heard this a Jewish boy feeding pigs. But you see the story goes that the Jewish boy returned home and he returned home to his father's house and his father received him.

His father forgave him. His father gave him the marks of sonship, the robe, the ring and the shoes.

Then there was the story of the father of whom we are told and when he was yet a great way off his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

[22 : 00] This is more than empathy. You see there is a difference between compassion and empathy although both concepts are related. Empathy refers to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person.

But compassion is when those feelings and thoughts includes the desire to help. And as we noted last week in the ancient world of the east it was considered to be very undignified for a man especially who had become elderly to run but the father ran before the villagers before they would perform the case or the cutting off ceremony cutting the boy from his family community and faith.

In other words we can sum it up like this that the father took the boy's shame upon himself. I wonder by this time how the Pharisees and the scribes who were listening how they were feeling.

All along Jesus had been taking a sharp jab at them. He was setting before them the joy God has in seeking and saving lost sinners like publicans like me and like you.

While they were flocking to Jesus the Pharisees and the scribes were rejecting them. But now he is going to apply the story in a very vivid way to his audience.

[23 : 35] It is important that we read this story as we read this story that we keep the audience before our mind. We must remember that he was speaking to the Pharisees and the scribes who had complained and criticized him for receiving publicans and sinners and eating with them.

And so now we read his elder son was in the field and as he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing and he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

The elder son was coming home in the evening from working in the field all day. He was probably hungry and he needed food and he needed rest.

His clothes were properly soiled and stained with his day's work and he needed a change of clothes. But as he came near the home he heard music and dancing and he called one of the servants and asked what is all this about all this that I hear this all this music and dancing what is it all about?

And the servant replied thy brother has come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound and he was angry and would not go in.

[25 : 03] He was expected to join the celebration but instead he was angry and would not go in. In fact the word used here for angry means an explosive rage.

he was infuriated by his father's freely offered forgiveness and celebration. He refused to take into his heart the joy of his brother's return.

He refused to take into his heart the father's forgiveness just like the audience of Pharisees and scribes who refused to rejoice in the salvation of publicans and sinners.

The elder son was angry not because of his brother's return but because of his father's joy. He was angry because of his father's acceptance of his brother.

He was angry because of his father's forgiveness. He was resentful of his father's freely offered forgiveness.

[26 : 17] He just could not understand his father's ways. There are many people like that who get irritated because they cannot understand the love and the mercy and the forgiveness that the Lord offers to sinners.

The audience that was here before Jesus was irritated and annoyed that Jesus showed any compassion, any love, any mercy to publicans and those who were cast out.

The elder son was angry that such a character as his younger brother should have a place at all within his father's home.

You see, we have always to resist that kind of resentful spirit. When the Lord converts someone that perhaps was a blasphemer and ungodly and someone who was very pious and religious and dutiful in their lifestyle remains unconverted, there is always the danger of resentment towards the Lord's work and we must always be an out guard against a resentful spirit.

Now as we noted, the elder son was coming home in the evening from working in the fields, probably hungry, needing food and rest and needing a wash and a change of clothes.

[27 : 55] And all that he needed was inside his father's house, but he refused to go in. By remaining outside his father's house, is he not missing the very things that he was needing?

These are very solemn words and he was angry, he was in outrage and he would not go in. He lost all that he needed because he stayed outside the door of the home.

Everything was ready for the taking, but he deliberately chooses to stand outside. The elder son was not at a distance, he was not in a far country, he was at the door of his father's house.

He could hear the celebration, he could hear the music and the dancing, yet he missed out because he would not go in.

there are many, maybe yourself today, so near the father's house, even at the very door of the father's house.

[29 : 14] You can hear, as it were, the celebration, the rejoicing that is going on in the father's house for lost sinners, yet you deliberately choose to stay outside, and you will not come in.

And I use the word deliberately because no one forced him to stay outside. It was a matter of his own choosing.

It was a matter of his own will. Remember Jesus looking over Jerusalem, remember the words he said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not, a deliberate act, they would not.

The elder's son stayed out of his father's house, and refused to join because of his own stubborn will. He deliberately chose not to go in.

He deliberately chose not to join the celebration. Well, how is it with yourself today? Will you choose deliberately to stay outside the father's house, or will you come in?

[30 : 55] I wonder how the elder son felt. Did he feel miserable? Did he feel hurt? Well, there may have been a little of that, but I guess that he was probably busy justifying himself for his action.

Many souls are lost because they will find some excuse, or else they will justify themselves for not coming into the father's house. And is that you today?

Are you just outside the very door of the father's house? You are hearing the music, you are hearing the celebration, you are hearing the rejoicing that is made for lost sinners.

And yet, today, you're coming up in your own mind with the excuse, or else you are justifying yourself. for staying outside.

Yes, the elder son would say, my younger brother, look the way he spent his life, look at his lifestyle, look at the way that he spent my father's inheritance, my father's good gifts, and there he is, being given forgiveness by my father.

[32 : 21] There he is, sitting at my father's table, feasting upon the blessings. And I never went to the pigsty, I never went with harlots, I never wasted my father's inheritance.

inheritance. Therefore, I am right for not going in, justifying himself. Is that the way you are today?

Justifying yourself for not accepting Jesus Christ as your saviour. Justifying yourself for not coming in to the father's house.

you know, today we are at a very important moment, and it regards me and you. Every time the gospel is preached, it is the heavenly father entreating and pleading and beseeching you to join in with the joy of salvation.

You know, here in the story we find that when he refused to join in with the celebration, that his father came out and entreated him. And I think that is very important.

[33 : 40] It is very emotional and very moving. It is a very touching moment as the father comes to where his eldest son is. The elder son refusing to go on, the elder son angry in a rage.

But the father comes out of the house and he comes to him. He comes to where he is. And he entreats him.

I am sure that the elder son did not realize or gave any thought to the sin that was set before him. He was just like the fallacies and scribes who gave no thought to what was set before them in the person of Jesus Christ.

The father entreats and he pleads with the son. He requests and besieges the son to join in with the celebration. The father leaves nothing unturned in his resolve for his son to join the celebration and to be part of the family's joy.

You know the heavenly father left nothing unturned in his resolve for sinners to be saved. He sent the son of his bosom, his beloved son, he sent him to the cross of Golgotha and he delivered him up to the curse of the law, to the cross of Golgotha so that sinners like me and you could be saved.

[35 : 10] He left nothing unturned in his resolve for sinners to be saved. So that today then we are at a very important moment we are at the preaching of the gospel where the heavenly father is entreating and pleading and beseeching you to join in with the joy of salvation.

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the good news of forgiveness. It is the good news of acceptance with God. It is the good news of reconciliation with God.

Paul writes, now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's dead, be ye reconciled to God.

The father, the heavenly father is entreating you today through the gospel. But how will you respond? we are told that the elder son said, that he answered and he said to his father, lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends.

But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with hollards, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. Maybe we would be right to conclude, well the elder son has a point, has he not?

[36 : 57] I am sure that he spoke the truth. He had been faithful in working on the family farm. He did not waste his money. And we see how when we contrast that with how irresponsible and careless his younger brother was.

Nevertheless, his own speech betrayed him because in a moment of unguarded anger, he inadvertently revealed the true attitude of his own heart.

His relationship with the father was performance based. It was always performance based.

Here we have a man who prided himself on keeping the law. We recently met another man who prided himself on keeping the law by the name of Saul or Paul, who said that as touching the righteousness which is in the law, I am blameless.

He of course belonged to the audience that was before Jesus at this time. He belonged to the Pharisees who was, in their own minds at least, he was the most faithful of all Jewish sects in their appearance to the law.

[38 : 21] But Paul, like the elder son, prided in his own personal piety based upon the law. Jesus was surrounded at this time with people who were of the same spirit, who prided themselves in their outward keeping of the law.

The son was demanding what he thought he deserved. Well, are you of the same attitude as the elder son? Is your relationship with God performance based?

Do you think you deserve to be saved because you are so pious in your outward keeping of the law and in your good works? Do you think you ought to be saved because you are so straight and upright and pious and you do good works?

Well, that's the way that the elder son thought. His relationship with the father was based on his performance. father was but there were things that was missing in this man's life.

There were things that was missing in the elder son's life. The elder son was never a man who came to himself. He never knew the plagues of his own heart.

[39 : 47] He never knew what it was to struggle with sin. He never knew what it was to have spiritual poverty. He never knew what it was to be left with nothing.

he never knew what it was to swallow up his pride and seek his father's forgiveness because he felt that he had no need of repentance, that he had no need of forgiveness.

He never realized that he was lost. He was lost in his striving for self salvation. salvation. He was lost in his resentment of the father's forgiveness.

He was lost in the unrighteous desires of his own sinful heart. And the most solemn matter is that he was lost in his father's home.

Despite all his privileges in comparison to the one who was in the pigsty, he was just as lost to the father. You see, it is a most sad thing to behold those who are under the privileges of the gospel and still who are lost to the Lord.

[41 : 04] The father replied, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was me that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

the father brought to his attention all the privileges that belonged to the family and it would belong to him if he would only accept it.

Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine. You have all the privileges. They're set before you. What you have to do is to accept them.

And then he says, it was me that we should be merry and be glad. For this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

The word meet there means that it was necessary. It was me that we should make merry and be glad. It was necessary that we should make merry and be glad.

[42 : 15] It simply had to be done, not because the younger son deserved it, but it had to be done because of the father's love and grace demanded it.

It was meet. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad. For this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

It simply had to be done not because of the younger son that he deserved it, but because of the father's love and grace demanded it. Jesus is here teaching them how much love he had for the Pharisees and the scribes.

He had a love as the father had for the elder son, so he had love for the Pharisees and scribes. They too were invited to share in the joy of salvation.

If only they would accept the father's heart for lost sinners and came to Jesus in repentance and in faith. Well, what would the elder son do?

[43 : 25] Well, Jesus deliberately left this part of the story untold. It is an open-ended story. We are not told what the elder son did.

We are not told whether he stayed outside or whether he went in. It is an open-ended story. Jesus was giving the Pharisees and the scribes the opportunity to put an ending to the story themselves.

I suppose the real question was not what the elder son would do, but what they would do. What would they, the Pharisees and scribes do? Would they continue to think that they were better than anyone else, especially those publicans and sinners with whom Jesus feasted?

Would they continue to criticise Jesus for showing love, compassion and grace to those they thought was unworthy of such, to the publicans, to the sinners, to the outcasts?

Or would they come in repentance and faith and share in the joy of the Father's forgiveness and acceptance? For me and you, the most important question is how the parable will end in our lives, in my life and in your life.

[44 : 44] The truth is that we are to be found in both the younger and the elder son. And maybe today you are like the younger son, wanting to go in your own ways into the far country of sin.

Or maybe you are like the elder son, priding yourself and being pious and outwardly blameless in your life. So to be so upright in your life.

We know how the younger son responded but we will never know how the elder son responded to his father. Did he come inside and join in the celebration? Did he stay outside still angry and priding himself on his own good works?

The thing is how will I and you, how will the parable end in our life? How will the story end regarding me and you? Will we come in and join in the celebration?

Will we come in and be partakers of the father's forgiveness? Or will we stay outside still angry and priding ourselves on our own good works, how good we are compared to so and so and so and so?

[45 : 56] Well to be truthful I think we can find ourselves to be like them both much more than we usually dare to admit. for the truth is like them who were all lost to the father.

We are all lost to the father but the good news is that God's love, grace and mercy are extended to both kinds of sinners.

The father's forgiveness reaches out to both the younger and the elder son. And today the father's forgiveness reaches out to me and you. And whether you find yourself more like the younger son or whether you find yourself more like the elder son or perhaps a bit of both in you, the father entreats you today to join with him at the feasting table of his gospel, at the feasting table of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation.

The father says come, for all things are now ready. Both sons were lost but one was found.

The other son was given the opportunity but what he did with it we are not told. Did he remain lost or was he found?

[47 : 21] We are not told. Maybe you are saying to yourself well one day it is my intention to take the step and come inside the father's house.

I think it was Robert Murray McChain who said the way to hell is paved with good intentions. for the elder son to linger outside the door was to be lost.

And for you today to linger with a gospel invitation is to be lost. To linger outside the door so close so near yet it is to be lost.

Linger not my friend at the door. Linger not promising yourself much at the door because it is only when you come in that you are saved.

It was inside the ark that saved Noah. He did not linger at the door but he went inside the ark and he was saved.

[48 : 40] And it is inside it is inside it is in Christ that we are saved. And the father entreats you to come and to partake of the feast of the gospel.

He entreats you today to taste of his grace in love in mercy in forgiveness in reconciliation. Will you come inside or will you stay outside?

Will you be lost forever from the very doorstep of the father's house? Will you rise from the gospel invitation today and be lost?

Will you continue to linger at the door and be lost? Will you come in? Will you come in and receive forgiveness mercy reconciliation tasting of the grace of the father?

Our heavenly father is willing to make you to be a partaker of his grace. What will you do? Well, we don't know what the elder son did.

[50 : 01] And I don't know what you will do. the elder son knew himself what he did and you will know what you will do. Are you going to linger?

Are you going to be angry? Are you going to stay outside? Or will you come in? the father entreats you today to come in?

For all things are now ready. May the Lord bless our thoughts. Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord, we pray that thou through thy spirit would impress upon our hearts our meditations upon thy word today and that we would take to our heart what we have learned about the elder son.

Oh Lord, we pray that we would come to accept the father's entreating of us to come and to join with him.

To know his grace, to know his love, to know his mercy and to know his forgiveness. to be partakers of his heart of reconciliation.

[51 : 20] To know that we have peace with God. We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless the gospel among us, that thou would come in a day of thy power, for it is the work of thine own hand that shall give thee praise.

And let in our understanding open our hearts to thy word. We pray, O Lord, that the darkness may be dispelled through the light of thine own gospel shining into our hearts.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would continue with us during the coming days. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen.