

Attitudes

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[0 : 00] Our scripture reading this morning is from Philippians chapter 2, starting from verse 5 through to verse 11.

That's Philippians chapter 2, starting at verse 5 through to verse 11. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every new should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And may the Lord add a blessing to the hearing and the reading of his word this morning. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Let's pray together.

[1 : 23] Amen. Let's pray together. Amen. Let's pray together. Amen. Father God, quiet in our hearts and our minds, that we may hear what you have to say to us.

Help us to open our ears and our eyes that we may hear and see only Jesus. Help us to hear him speak to us into our hearts.

Take our lives let them be Lord consecrated to you. Everything we have we give to you and this morning just now we give to you our attention that we may hear your voice speak into our lives. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Paul when he wrote to the church at Philippi said this your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Now you might have heard people say time and time again what an attitude he's got. Look at his attitude or her attitude. and very often or more often than not people are referring to a negative attitude when they say that.

[3 : 15] But Paul wants us to concentrate our minds and our thoughts on him Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. he wants us to love him.

He wants us to honor him. He wants our lives to be a blessing to all whom we meet. And we can only do that where our attitude is fixed and firmly fixed on him.

in the story of the prodigal son Jesus gives us clear examples of attitude whether that be from a younger son his older brother or the father and it's those attitudes we want to concentrate on this morning to think about how they looked at life and how they developed their character and in each of those people we see different attitudes displayed.

I wonder this morning if we've ever felt anger if we've ever been jealous if we've ever been bitter or resented something or maybe we've felt rejected unforgiving disrespect we've shown or maybe we've been self-righteous I think I think there are times when we all fall into some of those characteristics those attitudes but God wants to take those attitudes from us and enable us to fix our minds on him your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus and when you think about it it is so easy to criticise other people living in sin or living in a wrong way without looking at ourselves

I need to remember that I'm going to say something about someone that I have to look at my own life first and ask God is my attitude right to those people those boys the cruel son and his older brother had attitude only the father in this story is portrayed as one full of love and represents God demonstrating how we should live our lives in every circumstance it's true to say that when Jesus told stories he kept his hearers on the edge of their seats they were fixed they were captivated because he was a great storyteller and he loved to help people find truth in what he was saying and it's exactly the same here in Luke chapter 15 the lost sheep the lost coin and the lost son and it's

the third of those stories we're going to look at this morning the lost son we can all find ourselves lost in some way in our lives we lose our way lose our direction lose our focus our attention lose our sight or our hearing and the resolution can sometimes be simply can sometimes be simple for example you might have noticed

[8 : 00] I've got a hearing aid well I had problems to go and get my hair syringed to take this hearing aid out gave it to Lynn and after the the no I didn't give her the hearing aid then when I came out of the the surgery I put it back in and I said no difference no difference I can't hear anything oh she said let me see your hearing aid so I let her see it and she said there's no battery in it so I forgot to put the battery in the hearing aid and sometimes we forget to do things that will help other people understand us and what we want to say and sometimes we forget to listen to God's voice to what he's wanting to say to us and in this this third story of the trilogy is one that hits home the hardest and we can all identify with it in some way there's a family there's what I would call two dysfunctional sons in different ways and a loving father who didn't give up hope as seen in his actions but which one of these characters would best describe you this morning which one of these characters would best describe me either in a human family or a spiritual family the church we all have issues and seek to deal with them in different ways sometimes when we deal with them we are sincerely right or we are sincerely wrong it depends how we look at it and how we analyze a situation and deal with it we are either sincerely right or sincerely wrong younger son thought that his solution was to make a request to his father he wanted his share of the inheritance now maybe even thinking that the grass is greener on the other side and that's often a misconception that other people have it better than we do whether he was enticed or just wanted to discover for himself what it was like he just wanted to get out of this current situation

I'm reading verse 15 of Luke not long after that the younger son got together all he had set off for a distant country and squandered his wealth in wild living and when you think about that he took his money his cash whatever it was he set off and in modern term he bought himself a new wardrobe he got himself new friends new circumstances new everything and you soon know who your true friends are when you have nothing left in the tank this young man seemed to have no true friends left and when that happens you eventually become drained you become lonely and you'll do anything to make ends meet he felt the pain he had to take responsibility for his actions he had to decide to go back home again he couldn't sink any lower he lost everything his family his so-called friends his fortune

Luke goes on to tell us the story that Jesus related and so he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country who sent him to feed pigs in his fields and he longed to fill his stomach with the paws that the pigs were eating but no one gave him anything what a picture he paints there the man in desperation lost everything got a job with a farmer who sent him out to feed his pigs he felt rock bottom and rock bottom became the foundation on which he rebuilt his life in a sense the far off country can not be in

Africa or Asia or South America it can be east down the road from you away from your comfort zone away from that that you're used to the love you've received that's where the far off country can be doesn't have to miles away to know testing or challenges and some people whom I have privilege to work with when I was with the Salvation Army found themselves in a far off country due to their addictions they lost everything their employment their security their family and any hope they once had was disintegrated by their actions and so

Jesus tells the story when he came to himself that was a pivotal moment he said I'll go home I have sinned I'm no longer worthy to be called your son and seek forgiveness he recognized his foolishness his flaws his failure and he sought forgiveness from his father I'm sure the father must have agonized for we don't know how long it was months years as he walked out his window at different people passing by his home as he strained his eyes to see if any of these people resembled his son his wayward son his lost son he agonized he no doubt wept how long oh lord he undoubtedly had seen many figures pass by during the time of his son's absence he watched for the extinguishing gate and no doubt had been disappointed time after time his hope was being drained but his love could not be extinguished and then we are told the magic moment arrived oh as he saw this man the clothes were different he was disheveled the appearance wasn't the same as the lad who left him so many years ago but the walk was the same that was a distinguishing factor that realized this person on the horizon was his son and what he said to his servants let's have a party you all like parties no okay well let me tell you something one day you're going to be

invited to a party up there you better start liking them he told his servants get a robe a ring shoes this my son was lost and is found again let's have feast and celebrate let's rejoice and how would church you be rejoicing every time someone new comes into faith where they've saw the wickedness the waywardness of their life and they've turned to

[18 : 50] God but there was two brothers younger guy who wanted to fly fly away take his chance but there was an older brother who was very conscientious in a sense and kept the family business going it's interesting to realise I think that he wasn't invited to the party he came home from his work that day and heard all this joviality going on and he said what's going on here and he was told by the servants your son has your brothers come home and he found his family and the servants celebrating how do you think he felt angry he felt angry we see that the story

Jesus tells he took umbrage at his father began to make his feelings known he felt ostracised unwanted unloved and he said to his dad dad I never neglected the work which required to be done I was faithful I never disobeyed you yet you never even gave me a young goat that I could celebrate with my friends when your son not my brother your son comes home what do you do you roll out the red carpet for him what was going on in that older brother's mind and heart at this time well as you look at that story you see undoubtedly there was anger there was jealousy there was bitterness resentment he felt rejected he was unforgiving there was disrespect to his dad and there was self righteous for his part the apostle

Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans chapter 3 verse 10 there is no one righteous not even one his attitude was wrong instead of being happy and glad that his brother had come home been restored again he took the opposite angle he wasn't happy at all how sad that was his attitude was wrong as was his brother's attitude when he had initially confronted his father with request and those Pharisees and Sadducees and teachers of the law who were listening to the story listening to it unfolding would have received a sharp lesson from this especially in relation to their own attitude the size of disbelief the shock uncomfortableness that Jesus was unfolding in this story especially the words that Jesus used and we can well understand the implications as he told this story as those who listened were in shock and disbelief they couldn't understand what was going on and in one sense

Jesus was saying to them you go to synagogue every sabbath but what about your heart what about your attitude they would have remembered from the scriptures words from 2nd Kings 10 and 15 is your heart right with me as my heart is with you and as I come to worship Sunday by Sunday as you come to worship we have to ask ourselves the question that we move into this church is my heart right with the people round about have I got some grievance some grudge has someone stood my toes during the week have they said something or done something that's offended me is my heart right and if

God asks us that question we know that his heart is always right with us his heart is right with us but is our heart right with him is our attitude to worship right and we come seeking to be blessed the Pharisees a society of scholars and pietists would I imagine have been rocked by this story and its implications before Jesus began telling the story we read in the beginning of Luke 15 they muttered this man welcomes sinners and eats with them and whatever we do or say it's important to remember that when we point the finger at someone in accusation there are three fingers pointing back at us and one going up to God

[26 : 21] Paul in his letter to Galatians said some encouraging words he said in chapter 2 verse 9 and recognizing the grace I had been given James Cephas and John those reputed to be pillars gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship so that we should go to Gentiles and they to the Jews what encouraging words they were God bless them above all else guard your heart for everything you do flows from it and that's a time of reminder for us everything you do flows from it so guard your heart the attitude of the younger and older brother were both at fault in different ways and therefore both required to be reconciled the father makes an important statement as he sought to bring out reconciliation verse 32 but we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again he was lost and is found therefore there's a reason to rejoice how has our attitude been over this last week over this last month some of those attitudes of the older brother anger the jealousy the bitterness the resentment the hurt feeling rejected or is our attitude what

Paul told the Christians to be the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control that is what we should be aiming at and looking at in our lives to

be filled with those characteristics those attitudes rather than the attitude of the elder brother but what will our response be this morning the two sons had to be reconciled there's a song we're going to play just in a minute I come broken to be mended I come wounded to be healed I come desperate to be rescued I come empty to be filled I come guilty to be pardoned by the blood of Jesus Christ and I'm welcome with open arms praise God just as I am what will our response be just as I am thank you Stuart put this video on just now and let's let's just meditate and reflect on what it's saying to us mix much to blog the letting the weeks