

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

Coming Home

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 15:11-24

SYNOPSIS

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Coming Home

A few weeks ago, we talked about the city Under Siege and the desperate situation those people faced. Yet, 4 lepers decided to take some steps forward in the hopes that they might live. God magnified their steps and they plundered the enemy. There are times when we face difficulties and feel as though we are under siege. There are times when everything is so tough that it feels as though we are trying to survive in a desert environment, like we are Walking in the Wilderness. God uses those dry times to teach us new insights and to prepare us for what's next. Those dry times feel like we are all alone, but that's never true. God is always with us and there are others struggling just like you. It's tempting to give up and turn away from God, but we must keep the faith. The siege and the wilderness are never the end. **There is always hope for a better day. You can begin taking steps right now that will lead to better days ahead.**

☞ Luke 15:11-24

"There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' 20 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

This is often referred to as the story of the Prodigal Son, however, Jesus starts and ends with a focus on the father of the prodigal. This story tells us a lot about God's character. In a nutshell, this story tells us that God is generous and forgiving. It starts with the son asking for his inheritance, and the father gives it to him right away. That's generosity. Then after the son makes a mess of his life, wasting that inheritance, the father welcomes him back with open arms. In fact, he's so happy his son has returned that he throws a big party for him. That's forgiveness. That is what God is like. He gives and gives, and even after we make a mess of everything, he welcomes us when we turn back to him.

☞ In the rest of the story, we see that the son was **Rash** and **Reckless**. He walked away from the father and blew his wealth in wild living. I call it **Wandering** and **Squandering**. He had it good at home, with everything supplied by his father, yet he wanted something different. In spite of



all his blessings, he turned away from home. Instead of working at home and serving his father, he decided to focus entirely upon himself. There's a whole culture being promoted today which emphasizes this focus on the self. "Me first." "What's in it for me?" "I have to focus on myself for now." **"Gotta take care of number one."** "I just need some 'me' time." That was the attitude of this prodigal son and it led to wild living.

Wild living can cover a lot of territory. I imagine there were a lot of crazy parties going on. No doubt there was substance abuse of various kinds. He probably engaged in all sorts of immoral activity. Having been under the protective covering of his father, he likely felt that he was being held back and thus decided to fully indulge himself. Sounds like a lot of young adults even today. Many of us know of those who had a pretty good life, but felt that Dad and Mom were denying them the freedom they wished for. So, as soon as they had the chance to do whatever they chose, they sort of went nuts. Some simply made a few poor choices that cost a little. Others got into all sorts of trouble. Parents in those times simply pray that their kids don't completely destroy themselves. Can anyone relate?

So, the son, being rash and reckless, wandered and squandered everything he had. But then **Reality** set in and he began to see the **Results** of his choices. Who could have predicted a famine would set in? Even if someone had prophesied it, I'm not sure it would have made a difference for this young man. And, even if there wasn't a famine, he still would have been in trouble since he had blown all he had in pretty short order. Here's the truth: **there's always an end result to the choices we make.**

Colossians 3:25

For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Galatians 6:7-8 NLT

You will always harvest what you plant. 8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

This young man had been blessed with abundance, but now he is experiencing the reality of these bible verses. He is **Overdrawn** and **Underfed** and has to hire himself out. In fact, the job he got was a dirty, smelly job. In my youth, I had to tend to pigs and believe me, it's not a pretty job. Cleaning out the water trough of a bunch of root diggers is disgusting. The son sold himself out; the bible calls this being a slave to sin. It's been said that **sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.** How many have known of children who break away from home and end up a complete mess? Their lives fall apart and some end up in all kinds of trouble. There's always an end result to the choices we make.

The son in our story is even worse off than those pigs. He wishes he could have some of their food, but even that is not happening. He was starving to death. He's finally in a situation similar to those four lepers in Elisha's day... starving, with limited options. They were going to die,



except for this one little sliver of hope. As I stated before, they weren't full of faith; they were driven by hunger. Here, we see the son in the same condition.

☞ Then he came to his senses and had a **Realization** that there was **another option**. It finally dawned on him that he could go back home. Even the hired hands at home had plenty of food with some to spare! God is calling his children today to come to their senses as well...

Revelation 3:1-2

you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die

Romans 13:11-12

The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light

☞ God is calling out, "wake up; **it's time to come back home.**" The son woke up and realized he had another option. He didn't have to stay in the pig pen and starve to death. Like the four lepers, he wasn't so much full of faith as he was hungry and wanted to survive. So, he made a decision. "I'm going back home."

Now I imagine there was some humble pie to be eaten. I'm sure he had gone off thinking he would enjoy life and do better than his father and brother at home. But now he has to go back with nothing left. There's a good chance he will be the target of jokes coming from his brother. Dad might just say, "I told you so," and reject him. But, he's hungry and dying. It's worth the risk of humiliation. So, he got up and went back home.

☞ He decided to **Repent** and **Return** home to his father. We've talked before about how repentance is more than just remorse. It's more than just feeling sorry for some poor choices. **True repentance will produce action.** He got up and went home.

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Revelation 2:5

Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.

Perhaps you have been living at a distance from the Lord. Maybe you've walked completely away and turned your back on God. It's time for a wake-up call. It's time to come to your ☞ senses, to repent and return to God. **If you want the abundant life that Jesus promised, then you need to live under the Father's supervision.** I've said before, you've been in charge of your life for a while now and look what a mess you've made of it. Why not turn to God and let him take charge of your life? I guarantee it will be a better life!



Here's the really good news: the father welcomed his son back! In fact, he was looking for him and saw him from a distance and then he ran to the son. He hadn't forgotten nor given up on his son. He was watching and waiting for him to come back home. God is the same way.

Psalms 53:2

God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.

☞ God is looking and waiting for you to return home. There's a great **Reception** and **Rejoicing** waiting just for you. The father ran to his son, hugged him tight and kissed him. He was so glad ☞ the son had returned home. Likewise, **God is watching and waiting** for you to come home. In fact, it was such a big deal that good-ole Dad threw a huge party. He brought out the best for this son-returned-home. The best robe; the best ring; the best sandals. Nothing but the best for this lost son!

You may have strayed away and dirtied yourself in sinful behavior, but when you return to God, he will cover you with a robe of righteousness. You may have lived away from God, but he wants to put a ring on your finger, securing your position with him forever. You may have walked away from God and stepped into all kinds of trouble and anxiety, but now God wants to put his shoes of peace on you.

To the father, it is as if this son had died and now is alive again. That calls for a celebration.

Luke 15:4-7

4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

☞ **It's a welcome home party!**

☞ Many have been rash and reckless, wandering away from God in one way or another. **As long you're living, it's never too late to come home.** God is waiting, watching from a distance for your return. It all begins with a realization and a decision in your own mind. Then, repent and begin to take steps to return to God. There is abundance waiting for you. Come home!

*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling; Calling for you and for me
See on the portals He's waiting and watching; Watching for you and for me
Come home, come home; Ye who are weary come home
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling; Calling, "O sinner come home"*