

## EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK OF LUKE

### Group Bible Study 2

#### PRODIGAL SON

#### VERSES TO READ:

#### Luke 15

11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.  
12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.  
13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.  
14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.  
15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.  
16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.  
17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!  
18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.  
19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.  
20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.  
21 And the son said to him, Father, I have

sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.  
22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.  
23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,  
24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.  
25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing,  
26 And calling to him one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be.  
27 And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has received him back healthy.  
28 But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and entreated him.  
29 But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me a goat that I might be merry with my friends;  
30 But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf.  
31 And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.  
32 But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

#### DISCOVERY PORTION:

Verses 17 through 19 say, "But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine! I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." Whenever a sinner becomes repentant through the operation of his environment, he has a certain evaluation concerning his own salvation. If a man does not want to be saved, he will not have any consideration concerning his salvation; he will not care about the matter or be bothered about it. But once he is awakened, he will begin to consider how he can be saved and what are the conditions for one to be saved. If you ask any sinner about the way of salvation, you will find out that he has his own idea of being saved. God has His way of salvation, and a sinner has his way of salvation. I am afraid that with a hundred sinners, there are a hundred different ways of salvation. Everyone has his concept, and everyone has his evaluation. The prodigal son had his way of salvation. He thought that when he saw his father, his father would rebuke him with a stern face, and so he would answer, "The inheritance that you gave me has been spent. I cannot use another penny of yours anymore. But you are a rich man and have many hired servants. Just hire me as you have hired one of your servants." For him, salvation was not to be a son but a slave only!

A sinner's way of salvation is by giving others what they deserve and receiving back what they deserve. It is by working for others and receiving wages from them. The amount of work one does is the amount of wages one receives. It is by being a slave and not a son.

Verses 20 through 22 say, "And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet." The prodigal son rose up to come to his father. When he saw the father, he repeated the speech he had planned. He said that he was not worthy to be called his son and was going to say more, "but the father said to his slaves."

**Salvation is according to God's concept and not according to our concept. No one in the world is saved according to what he thinks but according to what God thinks.**

The prodigal son's concept was to only be a hired servant. Our thoughts are filled with the law, which is always a question of doing something and receiving something back in return.

Salvation tells us how God wants to treat us, not how we think that God should treat us. According to our concept, we will always be a hired servant. When we remember the Lord, we

think of ourselves as sinners, but God considers us as sons. We think that we deserve to perish, but He puts us at the feasting table. We cannot speak enough of God's grace.

While the prodigal was still a long way off, the father saw him and was moved with compassion. What is compassion? Only after a person has fallen into a low estate can compassion be exercised. Compassion is directed downward from above; it is applied in mercy towards someone. If the son had come back in a grand manner, there would have been no way that the father could have shown compassion toward him. How was compassion exercised? When the father saw that the son had degraded into the position of a beggar and actually was a beggar, compassion was exercised. Only a beggar can become a son. Only a beggar standing by the door can sit at the feasting table. Only a beggar far from God can draw nigh to Him. When our condition becomes that of a beggar, God's compassion is moved. When we hear the Father telling us that our sins are forgiven, we have peace and joy. If we have not yet received the freedom of forgiveness, we are indeed poor men.

Verse 24 says, "Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry." God says that we should be merry. What are the reasons for being merry? There are two reasons. The first is that the son was dead and now lives. The second is that the son was lost and now is found. This is why we should be merry. Being dead and

living again is the son's gaining something. Being lost and being found again is the father's gaining something. The prodigal son was originally a son; now he becomes a son once again.

In this parable we always think about the poor prodigal son, who wandered in destitution and longed to be satisfied with carob pods when no one would give him anything. When we consider how he turned, we rejoice for the great blessing he received. But who was the one who had lost the son? It was not the son but the father. The poor one was the father; the suffering one was the father. It was the father who had sacrificed his heart and wasted his money on his son's education. This is why the father said that his son was lost and now was found, and why they began to be merry. Have we ever thought that when we turn back and obey, God's heart will rejoice? The highest point of the gospel is not to show us what the sinner has received but what God has obtained. We have squandered the money, but God has suffered. We should give ourselves totally to God. How much have we given to God? Do not think that it is all right to be a little cold. We have to realize how much God suffers by our little coldness. Do not think that it is all right to love the world a little and be mixed with it a little. We have to realize how much this affects God. This will cause God to suffer. Every time we come before God, consecrate ourselves to Him once again, and deny ourselves once again, God gains something, and we are giving joy to God.