

Sunday School Lesson, Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

by Pastor Dwight Benoit

Spring Quarter Lesson ~ March, April, and May 2023

**General Theme:** "JESUS Calls Us!"

Unit I, "Called from the Margins of Society" (The Gospels)

Unit II, "Experiencing the Resurrection" (The Gospels)

Unit III, "The Birth of The Church" (Acts of The HOLY SPIRIT)

**Lesson Subject:** LOVE in Difficult Times

**Text:** Luke 15: 11-24

Luke 15 describes "The LOVE of GOD as our FATHER expressed through JESUS our LORD/SAVIOR!"

As FATHER, GOD does not hold back LOVE from us... HE does not wait to shower us with LOVE until we've earned it. GOD our FATHER, LOVE is steady, a powerful stream of unconditional LOVE to HIS children.

We Know HIS LOVE by...

1. *Sending HIS SON.* (John 3: 16 – "For GOD so loved the world, that HE gave HIS only begotten SON...")
2. *Revealing GOD our FATHER.* (John 12: 45 – "And whosoever sees ME sees HIM WHO sent ME.")
3. *Adopting Believers.* (1 John 3: 1 – "See what kind of LOVE The FATHER has given to us, that we should be called children of GOD.")
4. *Discipling HIS Children.* (Hebrews 12: 6 – "For The LORD disciplines the one HE LOVES.")

Our challenge from these Lessons is to LOVE like we've been LOVED!!!

Lessons Topics...

1. A Son's Request (Luke 15: 11-16)
2. A Son's Repentance (Luke 15: 17-19)
3. A FATHER'S Unconditional LOVE (Luke 15: 20-24)

1. *Lost in sin*, shows itself by "foolish decisions" we make. This *lostness* breaks our fellowship in relationships. (Who wants to be around "foolish thinking?") It destroys communion and communicating. It *degrades* and *dishonors* by a deliberate choice and willful separation from lifelong relationships. This is the backslider's condition who breaks fellowship with GOD our FATHER for love of the world.

--V. 12, *Selfish*... Personal gratification... "...give me the portion of goods..."

[Its *dishonoring* to GOD that we should seek to manage our own lives with HIS gifts.]

--V.13, *Wayward*... I'm going into the *unknown*... leaving LOVE, security, richness, *graciousness*, seeking pleasure—pleasing self. "...into a far country." [The self-will is a rebel against GOD!]

--V. 13, *Reckless*... When we exchange sweet fellowship with our FATHER for "riotous living" of the ungodly, it results in *wasting* "the *gracious* gifts of GRACE!" What do we waste for 'the pleasure of sin?' "...And there wasted his substance..." Once, twice or many times before—*forgiveness, peace, joy, LOVE unconditionally.*

[When the 'pleasure of sin' replaces these gifts, notice how quick they die (we die) away.]

--V. 14, *Misery*... leaving **The FATHER** is to be *unprepared* for “mighty famines...” a hungry soul comes upon those who spend their gifts for that which is not *Living Bread*. “...When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine...” [The rebellious always dwells in a ‘dry land.’]

--V. 15, *Despair*... when we *willingly* give away our substance, we *desperately* give away ourselves... we forfeit *sonship* for *slave-ship*... Pride goeth before destruction... “...he went and joined himself to a citizen...”

--V. 16, *Friendless*... sale our souls for naught... so low, we will eat almost anything... for *control's* sake, no man will ever give a *sin-wasted sinner* what he needs... [you might as well expect heat from an iceberg.] “...no man gave unto him...”

2. V. 18, *Resolve*... It's sad to find **CHRISTIANS** (sons and daughters) “out of *fellowship* with **GOD**, their **FATHER**!

Only two things are needed: 1. To Come to themselves. 2. To come back to their **FATHER**. **LOVE** stays ready to *restore*... **Peace** stays ready to *reside*... *Fellowship* stays ready to *continue where it was left off*...

I'm so glad for the gift to “remember” our **FATHER'S** house, and provisions there... it blows on the smoke of our wasted life and starts the fire... “I will arise and go to my **FATHER**...” and he did!

3. V. 20, *Gracious Reception*... **The FATHER'S LOVE** always cast out our *fears*... *true confession* always brings you home to **The FATHER**... [what value is their in *confession* if there is no turning away from *sin*] ...now all that **The FATHER** had was at his disposal... [by taking his portion he forfeited all right to further blessing, BUT he is saved by **GRACE**, and **The FATHER** is happy. (Ephesians 2: 8) “...**HE** fell on his neck and kissed him...”