

Things Our Savior Has Taught Us Pray Our Heavenly Father

"Thy will be done..." answered and applied;

"Forgive us our trespasses..." answered and implored.

Luke 15:11-32

TEXT: *Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "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. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 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! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' 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. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "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. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 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.'"*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

In Romans 1 and 2 the Holy Spirit describes two types of unbelievers. One kind revels in gross immorality, the other kind boasts before man and God of its own righteousness.

Of the immoral ungodly Paul writes: *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,... For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him,... Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another... he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done... Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only*

continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. The behavior of our society stands as evidence of the unbelief that surrounds us!

On the other end of the scale, Paul describes the ungodly who are hypocrites and wear a man-made righteousness, and warns that they, too, are rejecting God's grace in Christ. The Jews who rejected Christ Jesus are Paul's case in point. Paul wrote to warn them also: *Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; ... You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?* Ro 2 Remember, you must be HOLY as the Lord is holy!

Both extremes are unbelievers who reject God by rejecting His grace through Jesus. But believers also have an Old Adam that is prone to behave, in one extreme or the other. In order that we do not fall to either extreme and lose our faith, Jesus has taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer that has two petitions that address these two dangerous sins of unbelief. And with a beautiful parable of two sons who all away and are restored by the grace of their father Jesus emphasizes these two petitions: **I. "Thy will be done..." answered and applied; II. "Forgive us our trespasses..." answered and implored.**

Not much more needs to be said about the first son. His lust for pleasure makes him demand his portion of his inheritance and he goes out and wastes it by gratifying every sinful desire. He seeks every happiness, but soon ends up in the gutter. It's a very common story throughout the ages.

His father lets him go, not because he condones this, but because there is nothing he can do with his son's determination. So with sadness the father lets him have his way, knowing how this will end even before it begins. He knows that his son may be lost, and sadly watches him take the road to self-destruction.

Father can do nothing, but the Lord knows where this erring son is and graciously works to bring him to repentance. The Bible says: *He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 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! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'* So he got up and went to his father. Sometimes the Lord has to smack us hard to get our attention. Sometimes the sinner must hit rock bottom before he "comes to his senses." When this happens, it is a great blessing from God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here is the prayer: "Thy will be done!" answered and applied by the Lord. God's good and gracious will is clearly stated in that ... *God our Savior ...wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* 1 Ti 2 Thirty-seven years of being a pastor has brought me more than once to the bedside of a fellow Christian whom the Lord has graciously brought to their senses. The prayers of parents and friends finally were applied by a gracious spanking by the Heavenly Father. Then there is this petition applied to ourselves as well since we also know that we have a sinful nature. I often pray *"Thy will be done..."* with the personal application of asking the Lord to do whatever He has to do to get me to heaven. Are they wealth and pleasure that would lead me astray? Take them from me! Is it human love and affection that keeps me from worship and your word? Take them from me! Do what you, in your gracious wisdom must do to "bring me to me spiritual senses" and keep me in your grace!

Never stop praying for those who have fallen to sin! Pray that God will do what He must to bring them to their senses! And while we pray this, let's not forget the other son who is almost lost to arrogance and pride! He is the example of why we pray:

"Forgive us our trespasses..."

Ah! The good son! He stays home and works hard. But sometimes the prodigal is the one who stays home and becomes arrogant and trusts in his own righteousness. It all comes out when his repentant brother returns. He cries, "It isn't fair!": ***he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!*** It isn't fair! He even dissociates himself from his father's love and from the family: ***'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you... But when this son of yours ... comes home...*** He wants nothing to do with his brother or his father! He knows better, is better, and deserves better -- so he believes.

"That's right," says his father, "GRACE isn't fair-- it's UNDESERVED LOVE! You have just admitted that you believe that being my son is based upon your 'working and slaving' for me! Well that's not true! It is by grace that God gave you to me, and you will always be mine. Now repent of the arrogance you have now revealed. Repent and pray this prayer: ***Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us!*** Another way of saying these words is: Lord, forgive me like I forgive others! Treat me just as I treat others!

The father could have said: you want me to be fair? Then I must also disown you for your arrogance for you are MY son and I am YOUR father. You did not choose me, but I brought both you and your brother into this world. Instead the father remains gracious and instructs his son about grace: ***My son,... you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 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.*** "Have pity on your brother who has returned. He has wasted his inheritance. That is a consequence of his own sinful behavior. But rejoice with us, for he has returned!"

We have to celebrate because Jesus has taught us to pray our Heavenly Father who does not treat us as our sins deserve, but by His grace has adopted us through faith in Jesus to be His children. Jesus, our divine brother not only paid for the worst of our sins with His own blood, but He also kept that commandments perfectly as the Heavenly Father wants them to be kept so that there is a righteousness of a man who also is true God that is given to all who believe in His name.

This a parable of two sons who had to learn how to pray the Lord's Prayer: They will be done... and Forgive us our trespasses..." Lord, do whatever it takes to bring me to my senses that I may always repent and come back to you, and Lord, treat me as you want to treat all sinners so that I also may learn to teach them of your grace and forgiveness as I forgive them. Amen.