

Two Parables

Then he told them many things in parables.—Matthew 13:3

In the parable recorded in Luke 15:11-32, the man represents God, the older son the Jewish religious leaders, and the younger son the Jews who were careless of their spiritual privileges. Many of these careless Jews were sorry for their sins and were baptized by John.

When the prodigal son saw the error of his ways, after having recklessly spent all of his inheritance, he wanted to return to his father's home as a servant. The father not only welcomed him and forgave him but gave a great feast in his honor.

The proud older brother (who represented the scribes, Pharisees, and religious leaders) did not want to see the father give his wealth and love to someone he thought did not deserve it. However, the father was extremely happy to have his second son home again.

These are the gifts the father gave to his prodigal son: a beautiful robe (picturing the robe of Christ's righteousness), an expensive ring (showing God's influence and power and favor), shoes (sandals of peace), and a fattened calf (as in the tabernacle sacrifices, showing forgiveness.)

Those people represented by the older brother were outwardly righteous in following the law but in fact they were self-righteous, and full of pride and jealousy.

The same lesson is found in another interesting parable (Luke 16:19-31). The Jewish nation was represented by the rich man.

His table was loaded with elegant foods, representing the rich promises of God. The Jews were the only ones to have these promises at that time. Lazarus, the poor beggar, who wanted only to eat crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, represented the Gentile nations. The Gentiles were poor concerning spiritual promises. But the rich man died and great blessings then went to the Gentile nations for God's favor was no longer only for the Jews. The Gentiles could now be invited to become part of the church class. Lazarus also died, picturing the end of his condition of disfavor.

There are many more lessons in this parable, and in the other parables. Remember, they are only stories designed to show lessons Jesus wanted his disciples to learn.



Original Photo-Drama slide

The "prodigal son" was a picture of the publicans and sinners in Israel.