

Enough and to Spare

Luke 15:17

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2018-07-01

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Text

For our communion meditation I want to look at one verse in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. And when I was studying for this, I was struck by a statement in one of my commentaries. It said,

As in the treatment of all parables, the teacher and the preacher would do well not to try to explain it; let it stand alone and do its work on and in the hearer. Like an explained joke, an explained parable violates the listener.¹

I don't 100% agree with that statement - and I don't think he does either because he gave a lot of explanation. But I do want you to get the feel for Christ's heart as I read the story that came from His lips without interruption. Luke 15, beginning to read at verse 11. Please stand.

Luke 15:11 Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" ' 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is 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 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' 28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted

1 Fred B. Craddock, Luke, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 187.

calf for him.’ 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”

This parable could really be the subject of many communion talks. I will not do it justice this morning. But I want to hone in on one phrase in verse 17 as a window into the whole parable and as a window that gives us a glimpse of God’s grace. It’s the phrase in verse 17 where the prodigal son realizes that his father’s servants have bread enough and to spare. And while the prodigal’s vision was fairly low - enough and to spare of food, he comes to realize that there was enough and to spare of many other things as well. And as we come to the Lord’s Table this morning, I hope we can come with gratitude and faith that the bread offered to us symbolizes the lavishness of God’s grace.

I. Enough and to spare of the Father’s forgiving love

The first thing that the prodigal discovered as he rounded the corner and caught a glimpse of his dad’s homestead was that there was enough and to spare of the Father’s forgiving love. He had earlier been worried about whether he would be received at all, and he had thought exactly how to give his speech, admitting that he was utterly unworthy to be a son. That was a good thing to conclude. He was unworthy. But Scripture is quite clear that God exalts those who humble themselves.

And what this prodigal son finds out is that before he can even spit out his rehearsed words, the Father expresses his eagerness to forgive. It says “when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.” The running, the kisses, and the hugs were the visible signs of the Father’s love and forgiveness before he even uttered the words.

Brothers and sisters, as you come to this Table, we have visible signs of the same forgiving love of our Father in heaven - the bread and the wine. They are wordless signs of His hugs and kisses. They remind us of the sacrifices that the Father made in sending His Son into the world. They remind us of the Son’s incredible love for His people that enabled Him to endure the cross. They remind us of the Spirit’s love and forgiveness as He applies the redemption of Jesus.

Satan may rob you of joy as he reminds you of your sin. He may want you to stay in the pig sty. But as you leave the pig sty and return to the Father, you can be assured that His forgiving love is enough and to spare. Yes, He can forgive even your horrible sin.

II. Enough and to spare of the Father's restoring grace

The second thing that the son found to his astonishment was that his father had enough and to spare of restoring grace. He didn't just forgive him and send him off. Astonishingly, he restored the prodigal to full and joyful sonship and fellowship. Before the son can get to the part of his speech where he asks to be a lowly servant, the father interrupts him and says, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

It wasn't just a robe, but the best robe that he put upon his son to cover his rags. The ring was given as a sign that he was still an heir. Shoes were given as a token of sonship, since slaves alone went barefoot. This was astonishing and unexpected. There was enough and to spare of the father's restoring grace.

And as we come to the Lord's Table, we need to realize that just as the best robe, the ring, and the shoes were signs of grace that fully restored, the bread and the wine are signs and symbols that promise the same restoring grace. God promises to restore us to fellowship, to be heirs of heaven, and to be sons and daughters. You may feel unworthy of such, and rightly so. You are unworthy of such. But God gives it to you anyway. Romans 8:15 says, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'" If you don't feel worthy to hug your heavenly Father and call Him Abba, ask Him during this communion to banish the demonic spirit of fear and bondage and to fill you with the Holy Spirit of adoption - the Spirit who enables us to sense this restoration to sonship. This meal promises enough and to spare of the Father's restoring grace. When you sense that, you too can be merry as the son and the servants were merry in verse 24.

III. Enough and to spare of the Father's continual provision

The last thing that this prodigal was astonished to discover was that there was enough and to spare of the Father's continual provision. He had hope to just be a hired servant so that he could eat well. Back in those days, day laborers had subsistence living. It was just enough to get by, but certainly better than what he had been experiencing. But to his astonishment, the

repentant prodigal received freely of the father's bounty. He received so much that the older brother is upset. It didn't seem fair.

And brothers and sisters, it isn't fair on one level that God is making these same promises to you and me in this Table. We are not receiving what we deserve; we are receiving what Jesus deserved. We are receiving bounty that is above and beyond anything that could conceivably be earned by us.

Ephesians 3:20 speaks of the Father as "Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

As you come to the Table, come with expectation that there is enough and to spare of the Father's forgiving love, of His restoring grace, and of His continual provision for your needs. Come with the humility of the prodigal, yes, but also come with faith, expectation, and gratitude. Amen.