

## THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS

### Lesson Twenty-two

#### GOSPEL PRESENTATION (3): THE LOVING FATHER RECEIVES THE PRODIGAL SON

##### **Burden to Impart:**

*In this lesson we see that we all, like the prodigal son, need to come back to our loving Father, God. Although we have all turned aside and gone our own selfish and foolish way, our loving God patiently awaits us to come to our senses, to repent, and come back to Him. When we do, He does not scold us or punish us. He receives us with tears of joy and kisses of love. He forgives our sins, covers our nakedness, and satisfies our hunger with His best, the Lord Jesus Christ who was sacrificed for us.*

**Memory Verse:** "Let us eat and be merry; because this son of mine was dead and lives again, was lost and was found" (Luke 15:23-24).

**Facts to Teach:** [Scripture reading: Luke 15:11-24]

1. The younger of two sons grew impatient awaiting his father's inheritance. He could not wait, so he heartlessly and selfishly demanded his inheritance even while his father was still living.

2. Very shortly after receiving his father's hard-earned gift (inheritance) the younger son left his father's home and went to a distant country. In a short time of loose and wasteful living all was spent. When all of his money was gone, so were his "friends."

3. Famine struck. He had no money, no friends, no job, and an aching, hungry stomach. Only one job was available, for nobody else wanted it. That was to tend and feed the dirty, stinking hogs.

4. The loneliness, hunger, and shamefulness did its work. This foolish, hard-hearted, and sinful son came to his senses. He realized it would be much better to swallow his pride, repent, and go back to His father and see if perhaps he would have mercy on him and receive him back, in spite of all he had done. He determined to confess his sinfulness and ask to work for his father as a servant, for he felt he was not "worthy to be called your son."

5. The father saw his son coming back home while he was still a long way off. Probably every day the broken-hearted father would go out to look for his son and to pray for him to come back home. Seeing his son, the father's heart was filled with compassion, love, and mercy. He ran to him, fell on his neck, and kissed him.

6. Once the prodigal (recklessly wasteful) son had confessed his sin and said, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son," the father allowed him to say no more. He could not stand to hear such words! Although he did not appear worthy, for he appeared as a poor tattered beggar dressed in filthy rags, he was this loving father's dear returned son!

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### Lesson Twenty-two (Continued)

7. The prodigal son expected some harsh treatment from his father, if he would even receive him back at all. What a surprise! The father forgave all his sins and rejoiced to receive his son back again. He changed the filthy rags for the best robe. His ragged hands received a golden ring and his tired bare feet were comforted with sandals. The greatest surprise of all was that a specially fattened calf was slaughtered for them all to feast on.

8. The father's exclamation, "This son of mine was dead and lives again, was lost and was found," shows us the deep feeling in this loving father's heart. He did not call him a "wicked son" or an "ungrateful son," but a "dead" son and a "lost" son. This shows that his heart was full of sorrow and grief, not anger.

#### Apply this as the gospel to the children:

1. When our heart is selfish and we turn our back on God and go away from Him, we, like the prodigal son, are only headed to ruin and misery.
2. God's mercy brings us to our senses and causes us to remember our dear God and Father. When we turn back to Him we find that He still loves us, and is patiently waiting for us to return.
3. Regardless of our sins and mistakes, He still loves us, welcomes us, receives us, and meets our need completely. He forgives our sins, covers our nakedness and shame, and satisfies us with Christ who as the fatted calf died for us.
4. Should we not open our hearts, and come back to Him today?

[See Hymns #1052]

#### QUESTIONS FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO

1. After his father died the younger son received his inheritance. (Luke 15:12) True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
2. The younger son handled his inheritance money wisely and spent it carefully. (Luke 15:13) True \_\_\_\_\_ False \_\_\_\_\_
3. When the famine came and all his friends left, what did the prodigal son have to do for a job? (Luke 15:15)
4. When the prodigal son realized how sinful and foolish he had been, what did he decide to do? (Luke 15:18)
5. What did his father do when he saw his son returning home? (Luke 15:20)
6. What four things did the prodigal's father provide for him? (Luke 15:22-23)
7. What does this parable show us about God's love toward us?