

SUBJECT: Topical Sermons.

TITLE: God is Calling the Prodigal.

PROPOSITION: To look at the parable of the prodigal son.

OBJECTIVE: So we can understand the parable.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read the text.

2. Regarding the text.

(1) The parable of the prodigal son is said to be one of Jesus' greatest parables.

A. It shows the unrighteous person who walks away and then returns.

B. It shows the self-righteous person who stayed but was puffed up.

C. It showed the merciful father who was caught up in his love for both.

(2) As we look at this parable, we want to keep these three people in mind because--

A. The prodigal son represents the soul who went astray and then returns.

B. The elder son represents those who refuse to accept those who have gone astray back into the fold.

C. The father, of course, represents God himself as he loves both.

(3) Let us look into this and see that God is calling the prodigal home.

3. Reference To S.T.P.O.

DISCUSSION: GOD IS CALLING THE PRODIGAL--

I. TO COME HOME WITHOUT DELAY.

1. Sin separates us from God.

(1) This was Isaiah's proclamation (Isa. 59:1,2).

(2) This was Paul's statement (Rom. 6:23).

(3) We cannot serve sin and God at the same time (Rom. 6:6).

2. This being the case, there is no time for delay.

(1) Felix looked for a more convenient season (Acts 24:25).

(2) King Agrippa was almost persuaded (Acts 26:28).

(3) There is no time for delay, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

3. Those who are wayward need to come home as the prodigal did and do so without delay

II. SO IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACCEPT HIM BACK.

1. Some times one might feel like those who have gone away should never be allowed to return.

(1) All have sinned and come short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23).

(2) None of us can say that we have not sinned (1 Jno. 1:10).

(3) None of us is without sin (Jno. 8:7).

2. We must be willing to forgive those who ask.

(1) If we don't, God won't forgive us (Mt. 6:14,15).

(2) The parable of the unjust servant (Mt. 18:23-30).

(3) We can't forgive if one does not repent, but we can have a forgiving attitude (Acts 7:56-58).

3. We cannot be like the elder brother.

III. WE HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH TODAY BECAUSE OF A LACK OF UNFORGIVENESS.

1. The brotherhood is being torn apart because of this attitude.
 - (1) The self-righteous among us don't want to forgive they are like the elder son (Lk. 15:28).
 - (2) It seems that when one is down then we want to really kick him and keep him down (2 Cor. 2:5-7).
 - (3) We ought not to turn against one another, but rather unite under the banner of truth (Jno. 17:20,21).
2. The idea that we cannot forgive one another is how the world operates.
 - (1) We are supposed to be different (1 Pet. 2:9).
 - (2) We are supposed to be unspotted (Jas. 1:27).
 - (3) We are supposed to live so that people sees Christ living in us (Gal. 2:20).
3. Only then can we be pleasing to God and build up the church.

CONCLUSION:

SUMMARY: IN THIS LESSON WE SEE GOD CALLING THE PRODIGAL--

1. To come without delay.
2. So it is our responsibility to accept him back.
3. We have problems in the church today because of a lack of forgiveness.

APPEAL: Let us not be like the elder son, let us welcome to prodigal home.

Preached at Belle, MO on January 11, 2009, morning lesson.

SUBJECTL: The Book of Philemon.

TITLE: Introduction to Philemon.

PROPOSITION: To look at an introduction to the letter from Paul to Philemon.

OBJECTIVE: To prepare us for a study of the rest of the book.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read the text.

2. Regarding the text.

(1) The letter was written—

A. By Paul to Philemon (v:1).

B. Around 60 A.D. while Paul was in prison (v:1).

C. For the purpose of having Philemon take Onesimus back after he had stolen something from Philemon and had run away (vs, 10-16).

(2) Though this letter is short in words, the lessons that we can learn from it are many.

A. All too often we skip this and books like it (such as Ruth & Esther) because we convinced that they have no doctrinal value to the Christian.

B. All three books are rich in doctrinal value as we strive to live for Jesus Christ.

C. We need to learn that just because a book is short that it doesn't deserve our attention (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

(3) This is an introductory study to rest of the book.

3. Reference To S.T.P.O.

DISCUSSION: IN OUR STUDY LET US NOTICE—

I. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN ABOUT FORGIVENESS.

1. We can learn that good people do make mistakes.

(1) While we don't know exactly what Onesimus had taken, we get the implication that he stole something from Philemon and we know he ran away (Phil. 1:10,11).

(2) No one is above making mistakes (Mt. 7:3-5).

(3) Even Peter made mistakes (Gal. 2:11-16).

2. We need to learn that these people can be profitable again.

(1) We need to learn how to forgive (Heb. 8:12).

(2) We need to learn that to forgive is to never hold it against them again (Heb. 10:1-4).

(3) We need to learn to love those who have wronged us (Mt. 5:43,44).

3. None of us are perfect and we all owe someone, especially God (Philemon 1:18,19).

II. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN ABOUT GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

1. God didn't always work directly (miraculously) in the lives of men.

(1) In Joseph's life he worked through providence and only twice did he miraculously intervene (Gen. 45:7).

(2) Mordecai told Esther that God may have been using her providentially (Est. 4:14).

(3) Now Paul tells Philemon that perhaps that Onesimus departed as part of God's plan that Philemon might receive him forever (Philemon 1:15).

2. We cannot know the mind of God unless he tells us.
 - (1) We are limited to what he reveals to us (1 Cor. 2:9-11).
 - (2) God may be using people providentially (through time, men, etc.) to do his will, but he is still behind it (Isa. 10:5).
 - (3) We don't know when God uses us providentially and when he doesn't.
3. At any rate, God is always in control.

III. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE BOOK ITSELF.

1. We can learn the lesson of brotherly love (Philemon 1:16-18).
2. We can learn the lesson of not keeping someone in bondage (Philemon 1:16).
3. We can learn the lesson of tolerance for others mistakes (Philemon 1:17,18).

CONCLUSION:

SUMMARY: In our study we have seen—

1. Lessons we can learn about forgiveness.
2. Lessons we can learn about God's providence.
3. Lessons we can learn from the book itself.

APPEAL: Let us keep these things in mind as we continue to study this book.

Preached at Belle, MO on January 11, 2009, evening lesson