

A BOY AWAY FROM HOME

Luke 15:11-32.

LESSON 94 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9).

BIBLE TEXT

Luke 15:11-32

11 And 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 falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And 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 fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet 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 unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, 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 elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

NOTES

The Home

In the world today there are few Christian homes, where the Bible is read morning and evening. Many children never see or hear their parents pray; many children never hear the Bible read. They hurry off to school in the morning without taking time to pray, and they go to bed at night without praying. In some homes grace is

never said at the table. What a shame it is to fail to thank Jesus for the food we eat and the many good things he gives us, and neglect to learn what God has to say to us in His Holy Book!

How thankful boys and girls should be who live in a home where the Bible is read and the family altar is not forgotten! Every morning a Christian may ask Jesus to keep him through the day. No matter what happens during the day, he can talk it over with Jesus. Again at night he thanks Jesus for the blessings received, and asks Jesus to watch over him through the night.

Children who are taught to love Jesus when very young will never forget the early teaching. People who wander away from God often return to Him because they remember the teachings they received in a Christian home early in life.

The Dissatisfied Son

Jesus told a story about a father and two sons. No doubt they had a fine Christian home. The father was kind and loving to his children. There was plenty to eat and the family was undoubtedly happy together.

But perhaps life was too quiet for the younger son. He may have thought his parents were a little old-fashioned. He had other plans than just to spend his life working on his father's farm. One day he went to his father and asked for the share that was coming to him of what his father owned. Of course, the father wanted his sons to be happy, so he divided all his living between his two boys. Perhaps the father did not know about the plans that the younger son had made, but in a few days the boy gathered his things together and left home.

Far from Home

All alone he started down the road. How do you suppose he felt as he trudged along? Was he free and happy or was he just a little bit lonely? After all, this may have been his first time away from home for any length of time. He walked and walked and was soon far away from home and loved ones. He perhaps thought: This is what I have wanted to do. I have plenty of money; I will meet new people and see new places. I will not do any work, but will have a good time. I am far from home now and no one knows me here. I am sure father cannot see what I am doing, so I will just do as I please.

He spent his money freely for whatever his heart desired. He became a very bad boy and did many things he should not have done. He wasted the hard-earned money his father had given him.

In want

Presently there was a famine in the land where the boy was spending his time. As food became more and more scarce, suddenly the boy realized that his money was all gone. What was he to do now? His carefree days had come to an end. He must work and earn money. He began working for a man who sent him into the field to feed his pigs. Oh, how he hated that job! But since he had nothing to eat, he had to do something. He became so hungry that he would gladly have eaten the food that the pigs ate; but because of the famine, no one gave him any food. The boys who had helped him spend his money and pretended to be his friends were not there to help him now. Something had to be done.

Thoughts of Home

One day as he sat all alone his thoughts went back to his wonderful home and his kind father. Then he thought of the men working for his father, and said to himself, "hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." The more he thought about it, the more he wanted to be back home with his father again.

Going Back Home

He realised that he would soon starve to death unless he did something about it. He finally decided to go back home. He would tell his father that he had done wrong – he had sinned against Heaven and against his father. He would say, I am “no more worthy to be called thy son.” He would ask if he might work as a servant. Before he left home he wanted so much to get away. But all was changed now – he was starving! He thought: If I can just get home! Oh, that my father will take me back! I will be happy to work for him, not as a son but as a servant. He was willing to humble himself and admit that he was wrong.

He arose and started for home. No doubt the road seemed much longer than it did the day he left home. But he walked as fast as he could and drew nearer and nearer home.

Forgiven

Suddenly as he walks, he perhaps sees the form of an old man running toward him. Who can he be? Surely not his father, for this man seemed bent with age. No doubt his father was young and active when the boy left home. The boy hurries onward. Presently he recognises the man as his father! The father receives his son with open arms and a kiss of forgiveness! Humbly, the boy confesses, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” He had also intended to ask to be a hired servant; but the father interrupts him as he calls to the servants to bring the best robe and put it on the boy, a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. All was forgiven! The servants did not wear rings or shoes in those days, so the son knew that he was once more received into the family.

The father still loved the boy that had left home and had been very wicked. We are sure that he had prayed that his boy would return home someday. The joy he felt at receiving his son safe and sound once more was almost more than he could contain. He said, “This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” Although he had not really been dead, yet he had been living in sin and lost to the family. Perhaps all the neighbours and friends were invited to a great dinner. Can we imagine the joy in the family that day over the return of the boy?

The Elder Brother

But what about the other boy? is he glad to see his brother again? As he comes in from the field and hears music coming from the house, he asks one of the servants what it means. The servant tells him that his younger brother has come back home, and the father has killed the fatted calf.

The elder brother became angry and would not go into the house. So his father went out and talked to him. But the brother told his father that he had worked all these years and had obeyed his father every day. He was jealous because the father had never given him a kid, or young lamb, so he could have a feast with his friends, but had killed a calf and made a feast for his younger brother.

The father said, “Son, thou art with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for his thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” Don’t you think the elder brother should have rejoiced with his father over the return of the wandering boy? He did not have the love in his heart that his father had. He was not willing to forgive his brother for his sins, as was the father. No doubt the father felt bad that the elder son acted that way.

Return to Jesus

This story is called the parable of the Prodigal Son. Let us try to learn what Jesus intended for us to learn from this parable: Jesus, like the kind father in the story, is watching for the return of every one who has gone far away from Him. He sees the heart that turns toward Him. Every boy, girl, man, or woman who was once saved and has lost the love of God out of the heart should return at once to Jesus, as did the prodigal son. All he needs to say is, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight.” Jesus will take him back, forgive

and forget the past and make him happy again. Those who have never been saved and do not know the joy of sins forgiven should also come to Jesus and be saved.

Another lesson we may learn is that when someone else receives something that we would like to have we must not be angry or jealous, as was the elder brother. Jesus wants us to rejoice with those who rejoice. How happy we should be when someone returns to God! We are told in the Bible that even the angels in Heaven rejoice when a sinner is saved. Jesus showed by this parable that He did not come to seek those who think themselves so good that they do not need Him. But He came to save those who are sinful and needy.

Perhaps not all who were once saved return to Jesus. Unless they do as the boy in the story who “came to himself” and returned to his father, they will not be saved. Today the Door of Mercy is still open and sinners may come to Jesus and be saved. He is still watching from a great way off for the return of the prodigal son or daughter.

QUESTIONS

1. When the father gave his sons their portion of goods, what did the younger son do? Luke 15:13.
2. What happened in the land where the boy was? Luke 15:14-16.
3. Was the father watching for the return of the son? Luke 15:20.
4. Did he forgive his boy? Luke 15:20, Luke 15:22.
5. Tell how the elder boy behaved when he learned that his brother had returned. Luke 15:25-32.

LESSON RESOURCES

TITLE

A BOY AWAY
FROM HOME

Lesson 94

Luke 15:11-32

Bring Them In

WATCH AND PRAY 163

4
4↓

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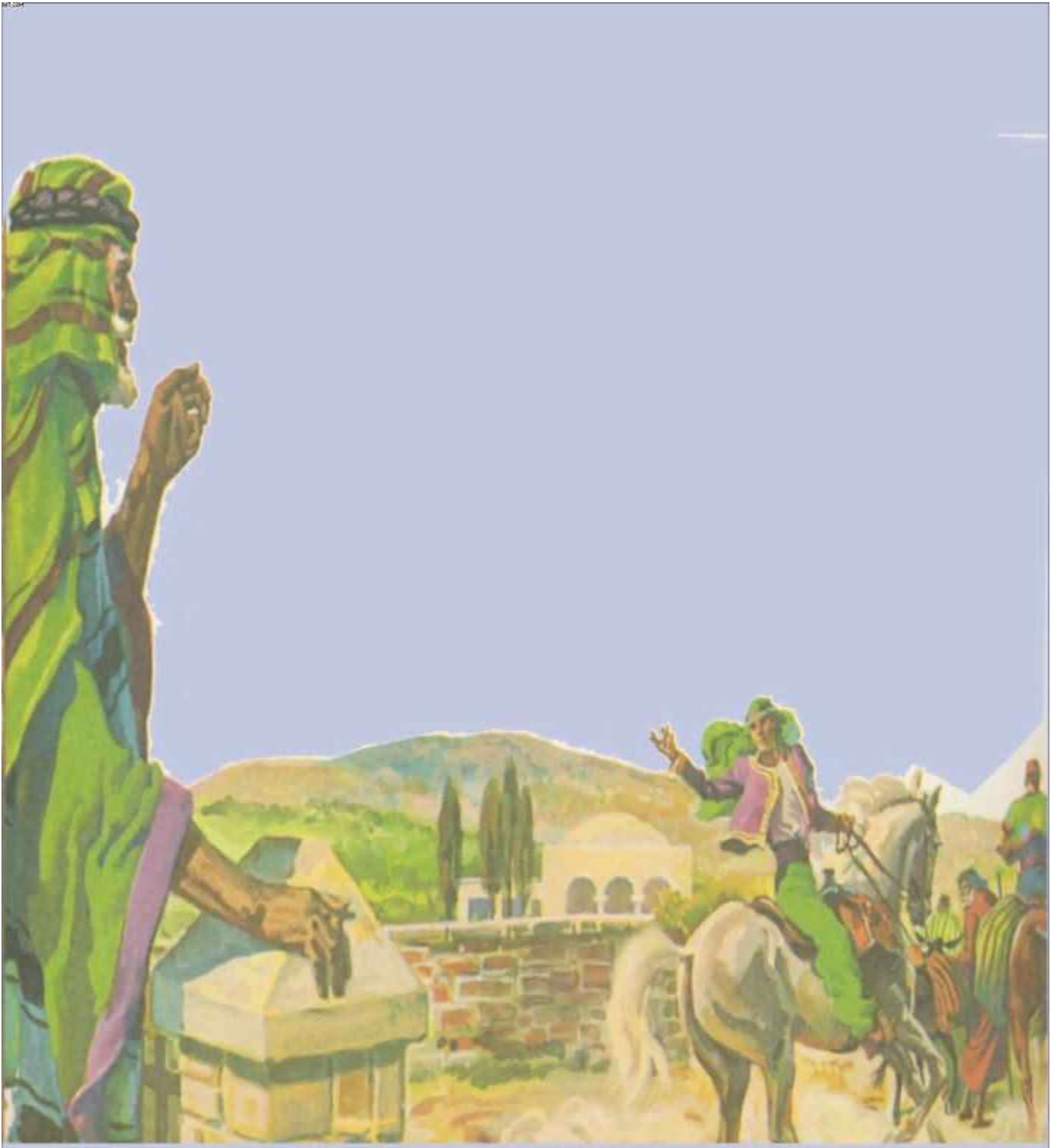
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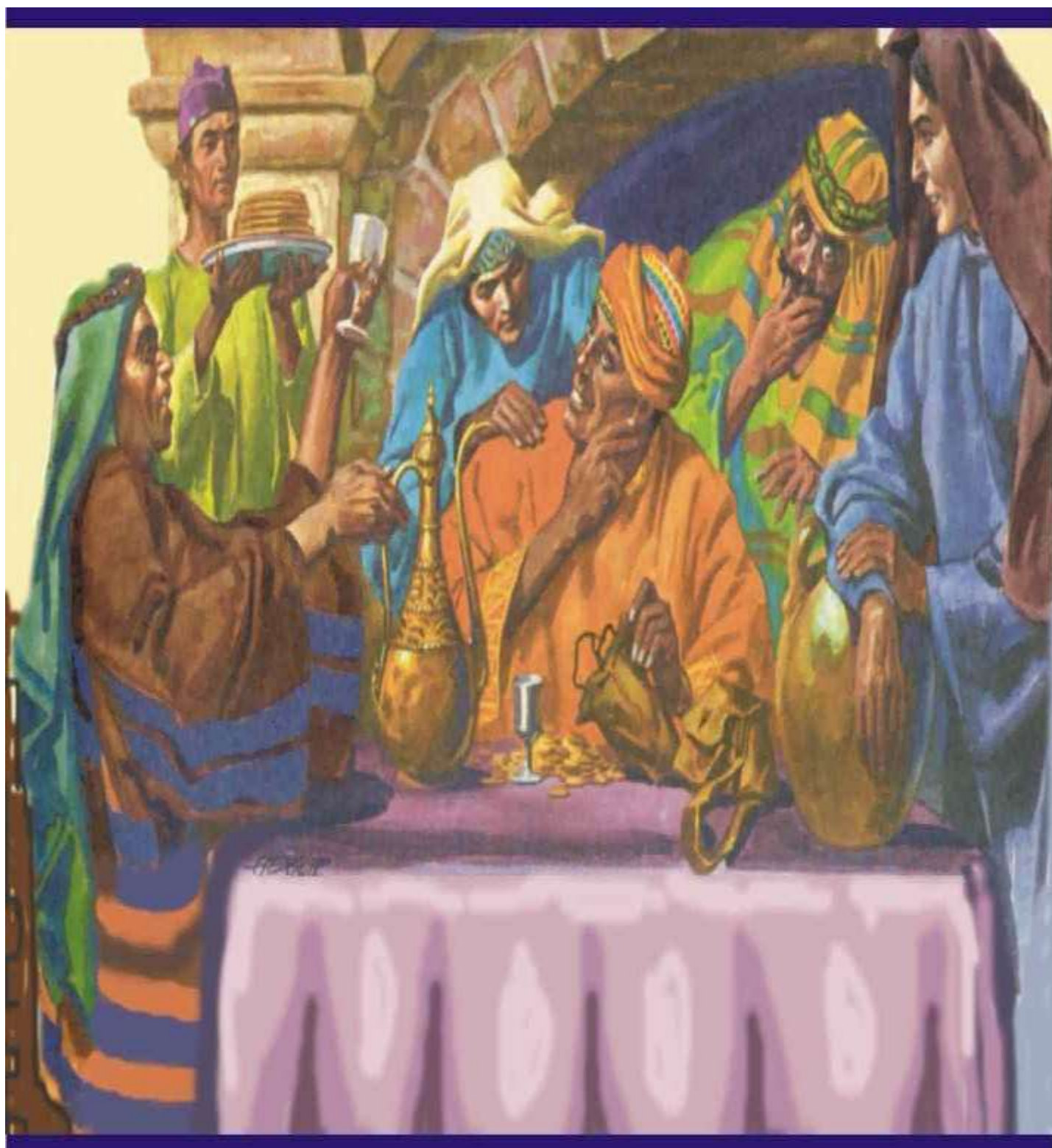
Bring Them In

Hark! 'tis the Shepherd's voice I hear,
Out in the desert dark and drear,
Calling the sheep who've gone astray,
Far from the Shepherd's fold away
Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring them in from the fields of sin;
Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring the wandering ones to Jesus

PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3



PICTURE 4

