THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE PRODIGAL SON
(Luke 15:11-32)

I. The prodigal in the beginning.
A. When we first meet the prodigal, he represents those who want grace without responsibility.
B. His words are “Give me” (vs. 12).
   1. This is society today - everyone wants things given to them without doing anything.
   2. This is also reflected in the thinking of Christians who choose a congregation based on what the congregation offers them and not what they can offer the congregation.
   3. It is not unusual for inheritances to be divided before death, Isaac did it, but it was unusual to ask for the inheritance before death.
C. The doctrines of salvation by grace or faith only.
   1. These are “give me” doctrines.
   2. You don’t have to do anything to be saved.
   3. God saves you and will keep you saved removing any responsibility from the individual.
D. The impossibility of apostasy.
   1. I can’t undo what God has done is what this teaches.
   2. I have no responsibility now because God has saved me and I can’t be lost.
   3. No false doctrine has caused more people to be lost than this in my opinion.

II. The older brother.
A. The older brother represents those who embrace responsibility but feel little need for grace.
   2. “I, I, I.”
      a. Everything he had, had been given him.
      b. He didn’t even realize this.
      c. All he had done is what it was his duty to do.
B. This is represented in Pharasaism (Luke 18:9-14).
   1. The Pharisees “trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.”
   2. He had an “I don’t do...” list.
   3. He had an “I do...” list.
C. This is also represented in what might be called “Church of Christism.”
   1. Our “don’t do” list:
      a. We don’t have women preachers.
      b. We don’t have instrumental music.
   2. Our “we do” list:
      a. We do take the Lord’s Supper every Sunday.
      b. We do teach immersion for the remission of sins.
c. We do teach the possibility of apostasy.
3. If we think that because we do right makes us right we have a big problem.
   a. We are right because we obeyed the gospel and God’s grace made us right.
   b. We stay right by doing that which we are commanded (Luke 17:6-10).
   c. We must be careful not to be self-righteous.
   d. We are saved by the grace of God and should never forget it.

D. Those who feel no need for God’s grace have little interest in extending it to others.
   1. Substitute the word forgiveness for grace in that sentence.
   2. Those that feel they are never wrong or need forgiveness and they are not willing to give it to others.

III. The prodigal in the end.
A. When the prodigal comes to himself he represents those who realize the value of grace and are willing to accept the responsibility to obtain it.
B. When you read the text, he started with “give me” and came back with “make me.”
   1. He realized he couldn’t do it on his own and did not deserve it because of his actions.
   2. He knew that he needed grace and mercy from his father.
C. There is a definite pattern that exists for one to appropriate the grace of God.
   1. God’s grace is offered (Ephesians 2:5-10; Acts 15:11).
   2. God’s law is given (Isaiah 2:2-3; Acts 2; Galatians 6:2).
   3. Man’s faith and works (James 2:14-26).
   4. God’s reward given to man (Matthew 7:21-23).

IV. Illustrations of the pattern for grace.
A. Noah is an illustration of this.
   1. Grace warned Noah of the flood.
   2. God’s law was to build the ark in a prescribed way.
   3. Noah’s faith and works led to the building of the ark.
   4. God’s reward was salvation from the flood.
B. The giving of Jericho is an illustration (Joshua 6:1-21).
   1. Grace: “I have given Jericho into your hand (vs. 2).
   2. Law: “You shall march around the city” (vs. 3-5).
   3. Faith: “They marched around the city” (vs. 14).
   4. Reward: “The wall fell down flat” (vs. 20).
C. Naaman is an example (2 Kings 5).
   1. Grace: the Israelite girl revealing the prophet to others (vs. 3-8).
   2. Law: “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times” (vs. 10).
   3. Faith: “He went and washed seven times in the Jordan” (vs.14).
   4. Reward: “His flesh was restored” (vs. 14).
D. The blind man of John 9 is an illustration.
1. Grace: “Jesus passed by” (vs. 1).
2. Law: “Go and wash in the pool of Siloam” (vs. 7).
3. Faith: “He went and washed” (vs. 7).
4. Reward: “He came seeing” (vs. 7).

E. The plan of salvation is also an illustration.
3. Man’s faith and works: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized and live faithfully for God.

From a sermon by Todd Clippard