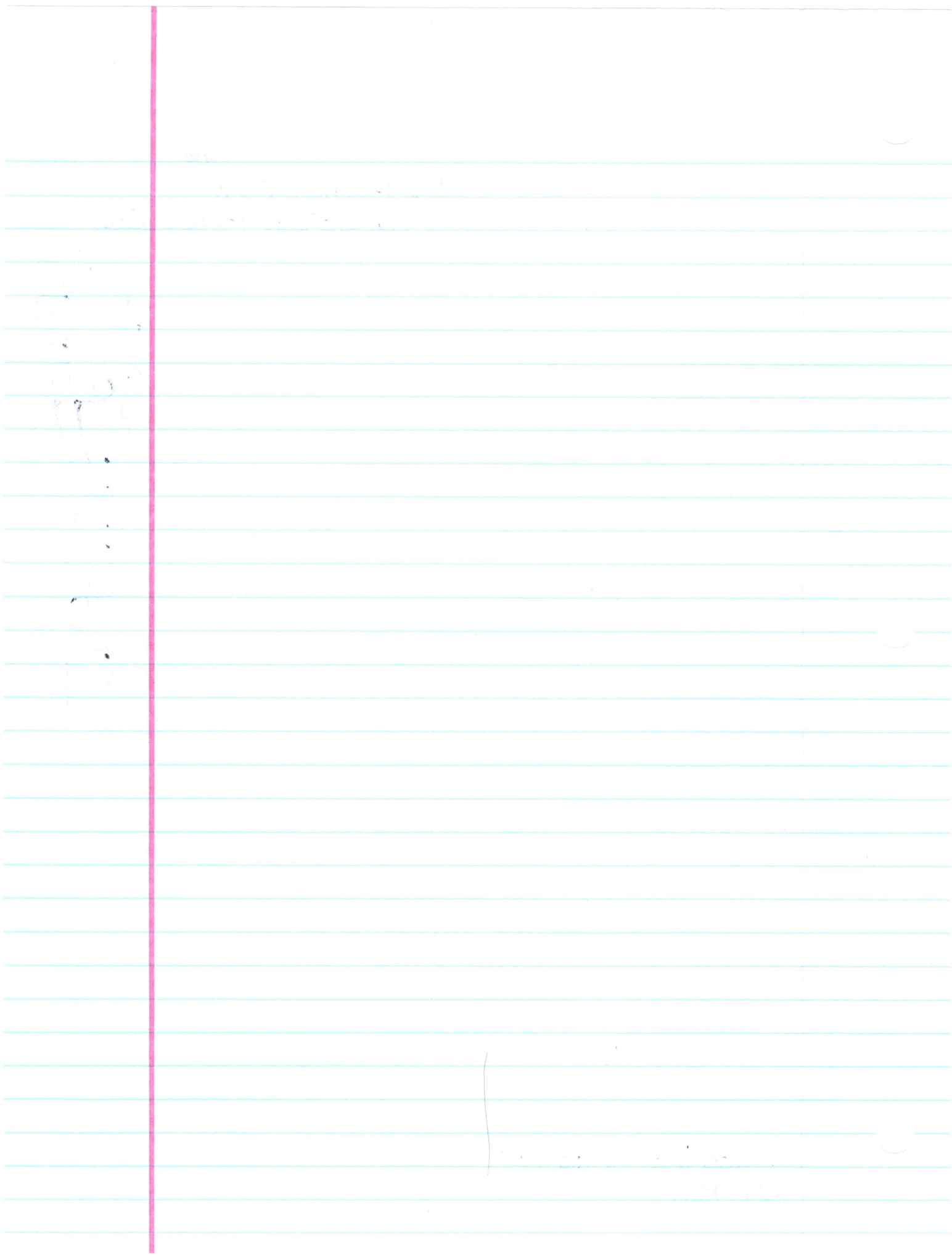


#16

The Prodigal Sons
- Knowing Your Place In God

SONGS OF PERSEVERANCE
- Psalm 32:7 -

The teaching ministry of
John Kerr



The Prodigal Sons

- Knowing Your Place In God

SONGS OF DELIVERANCE
- Psalm 32:7 -

• Luke 15: 11-22

• Key Verse: Luke 15:31

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art even with me; and all that I have is thine."

- Luke 15:31 (KJV)

Jesus had been criticized by the Pharisees and Scribes because He associated with sinners; even eating with them. So He began to teach about God's love for sinners. He taught two, parallel parables, with notable similarities:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • A man has 100 sheep | - A woman has 10 coins |
| • One is lost | - One is lost |
| • He leaves the #99 | - She ignores the #9 |
| • He searches diligently | - She searches diligently |
| • He celebrates finding it | - She celebrates finding it |
| • Jesus compares this to joy in Heaven over one repentant sinner. | - Jesus compares this to joy in Heaven over one repentant sinner. |

Now, there's a small break in the flow of the stories. There is none between verses 7 and 8; same parable, different way of telling it. But Jesus changes direction a little here. He had answered the Pharisees, "God loves sinners A LOT!" And...
Prodigal Sons.

* Notice verse 11: "Sons", not "sinners" as in verses 7 and 10. He doesn't just say it, He emphasizes it:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|---------|
| • "Son" or "sons" | - vs. 11, 13, 19, 21x2, 24, 25, 30 | - 8x's |
| • "Father" | - vs. 12x2, 17, 18, 20x2, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 | - 11x's |

God repeats things because they are significant! This father refuses to disown his son! I don't think this one is about a lost sinner, but a wayward son; yea, Sons.

I. A Son Living Like A Stranger

— Luke 15: 12-24

He lived in his father's house, enjoying the benefits of his wealth day after day without realizing how good he had it. He didn't realize that the benefits were attached to the father.

He had no relationship with his father outside what he could

SONGS OF

He didn't realize that the benefits were attached to the father.

get; so he took what he could get and left home.

He went to live in the far country, but he did not belong in the far country.

He became selfish, but he came from

DELIVERANCE

an unselfish home. Far country people were selfish, and GOOD at it! They gladly helped him "waste his substance." He tried to convince himself that he was one of them, now.

but famine came.

In God's country, He^{*} "makes a way in the wilderness, and streams in the desert," but in the far country it's every man for himself. (*Isaiah 43:19)

It was a "mighty famine." The empty, when we've wasted our substance, is always mighty — and at the worst time. It works that way when we run away from the Father, the source of our substance. You get paid on Thursday, but they cut off the electricity on Tuesday. Now, you have to pay the whole bill, not just the late portion, plus a late charge, reconnect fee, and deposit. Have you been there, too?

"He BEGAN to be in want" — v 14b. He had never done that before. "Want" was not part of his environment. This was an unexpected first. Suddenly, he saw how much his father loved him. Despite his lack of appreciation, his father made sure he did not lack. Now, that is gone.

"As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them."

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that fear Him."

- Psalm 103:13 (KJV)

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

- Psalm 23:1 (KJV)

Without a close relationship, he could not see all that his father quietly did for him.

SONGS OF

He couldn't see all that his father quietly did for him.

DELIVERANCE

Citizens of the far country have no interest in helping you. His store-bought friends were nowhere. So he went somewhere no Jewish boy would DREAM of going. He fed pigs.

Unclean pigs! Unkosher pigs! When we get REALLY stubborn and selfish, we don't come to ourselves until we're sittin' in it! It finally sunk in how good home was.

"and he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods the swine ate, and no one gave him anything."

- Luke 15:16 (NKGU)

The pigs got fed because they were income. In the far country, you are cared for only as it benefits the one "caring". So the pigs got the pods.

Then he came to himself. He had a good thought, but still came to the wrong conclusion:

SONGS OF

Religion tries to please the Father by serving.

• Thought: "It is better at my father's house, even for servants."

• Conclusion: "I should go be one of my father's servants."

* This is religion. *

DELIVERANCE

Religion attempts to please the Father by serving, but our righteousness is not of the deeds of the law. It is not of service, but of faith.

"For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

- Romans 4:3 (NKJV)

When you are sitting in the mess of your own sin, Satan will try to convince you that the only way your Father will have you back is as a slave. Selah.

"I am NO LONGER worthy to be called thy son."

Satan would love nothing more than to convince you that you no longer belong in the family because of what you DID.

- You did not get IN to the family because of what you DID.
- Neither do you get OUT of it because of what you did or did not do.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

- Galatians 2:16 (KJV)

"Do make me 'Like' one of your servants."

* Notice: Even in his request, he acknowledges that he is still a son. "my father's servants"; "go to my father"; "say to Him, 'Father...'". Though he planned to ask to be "like" one of the servants, he knew he was NOT one of the servants. Satan convinced him that he did not deserve to be a son.

SONGS OF

We are not sons because we deserve to be sons!

* WE ARE NOT SONS BECAUSE WE DESERVE TO BE SONS! *

He became a son by a birth he had nothing to do with. He was given life in his father's family and all he had to do was receive it as a free gift. His birth

DELIVERANCE was through water; and blood, and the suffering of the one who gave him life; and no payment was required of him. - Do you see it!?

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After waiting every day for his son's return, this was the father's response:

The son began his religious prayer:

- "Father," - He got that part right.
- "I have sinned against heaven." - Right again; above all else, our sin is an affront to God's righteousness. (Ps 51:4)
- "and in thy sight" - Still right; our sin always affects other people, even if we don't realize it.

"Sin is a reproach to any people."

- Proverbs 14:34 (KJV)

- "and am no longer worthy to be called your son." - This is where he misses it completely! This is also where his father cuts off the speech.

- Error #1: "no longer worthy" Can someone read back through the story and find the point where he was worthy? (vs. 12-16) Let's see... greedy, self-serving, scheming, rebellious, lustful, wasteful, disrespectful, etc, etc. I'm not finding any redeeming qualities.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

- Romans 5:6 (KJV - emphasis added)

"But to him that WORKETH NOT, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

- Romans 4:5 (KJV - emphasis mine)

* He never was worthy! *

He was a son by birth. It was a gift.

* We are not worthy! *

We are sons by the new birth. It is a gift.

"the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

-Error #2: "no longer worthy to be called thy son."

Since he believed that his behavior merited his position as a son; now he thinks he should not be a son because he behaved unworthily

Let me be clear. Our behavior matters. Our sin hurts others. Our good works glorify our Father before men. (Matt 5:16) Sin puts us in bondage. (Rom 6:16) Our good works bring rewards. (1 Cor 3:8) (if they are done in faith - Rom 14:23)

But...

Neither did the son's good deeds make him a son, nor his bad deeds make him NOT a son.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is knowledge of sin."

-Romans 3:20 (KJV)

The law does not bring righteousness, it defines sin.

* Jo, his father made it clear, where he stood:

1: "Bring out the best robe." - Favor!

* Get this: He had a SERVANT put the robe on his SON!
(Heb 1:14!)

READ: Genesis 37:3,4

Jacob made Joseph a coat of many colors. It caused division between Joseph and his brothers. He gave Joseph a robe that represented the favor and privilege of royalty or the very rich. Jacob was a wealthy man. He should have given one to ALL of his sons. They ALL were Abraham's seed and favored of God.

* Joseph understood his favor with his Father, God! It affected his attitude for his entire lifetime! God was able to bless

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Joseph because he understood where he stood.

In Israel, when a boy turned 12 years old, he became a **SON**. Until then, he was a child. On his twelfth birthday, his father took him to the city gates, where official business was conducted. He stood his boy before the elders of the city, and made this declaration: "Thou art my beloved son. This day have begotten thee." On that day, he **LEGALLY** became his father's son. Then the father put his robe (his coat) on him, and said, "Inherit my name." At that moment, he legally carried all the favor of his father's name: Glory to God! He became, "Son of..." (That's why all those genealogies in the Bible are important.)

DELIVERANCE You are clothed with God's favor!

"Beloved Now are we the SONS of God,"

- 1 John 3:2

Then, the father gave him his ring, and said, "Inherit my wealth!" At that moment, that boy could **LEGALLY** buy, sell, or borrow on His father's authority. Glory to God!

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

- Philippians 4:19 (KJV)

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

- Romans 8:16,17 (NKGJ)

*One more thing... Do you understand that, all this time, the father had "the best robe" clean and ready; just waiting for

his son to return?! And the servant knew what robe he meant! If you're still resisting God, do you understand how badly He wants you to return, and what is waiting for you?

SONGS OF

2: "and put a ring on his hand"

The moment
you return to
your Father,
He wraps you
in His favor!

- Authority!

His father was saying, "I am returning to you the authority of sonship that you walked away from." When we return (repent), God immediately restores

DELIVERANCE

the place of dominion He gave us. (Luke 10:18,19; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:4-7)

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

- Isaiah 59:1 (KJV)

Look at the Father's heart:

- 1 - He does not stop reaching out to save you.
- 2 - He does not stop listening for you to call on Him.
- 3 - He does not hide His face from you.

your sin is what is in the way.

3: "and sandals on his feet"

- Rights!

As a son, he had rights that a servant did not have.

Paper was rare. In fact, scrolls were written on skins.

So when contracts were made, they were ratified symbolically. We get customs like a handshake, or "high-five" from those. (see: Job 17:3; Proverbs 22:26; 17:18; 6:1) One such custom was removing one or both sandals. It represented surrendering your rights. In Ruth 4:7, the man who was nearer kin than Boaz removed his sandal to say, "I give up my right to Elimelech's inheritance."

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In Exodus 3, Moses encounters God at the famous, burning bush. God is about to recommission Moses to the assignment He gave him 40 years earlier. He says:

"Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

- Exodus 3:5 (KJV)

God was saying, "Moses, you are standing before God (v.6), and when you stand before Me, you surrender your rights."

The younger prodigal's father was saying, "I restore to you all the honor, authority, and benefits of a son. You are NOT a servant!"

- "You are not a servant!"

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called

SONS OF

You are not a servant!

You do not work FOR God; you work WITH Him.

DELIVERANCE

you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you."

- John 15:15 (KJV)

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

- Ephesians 2:6,7 (KJV)

"For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

- 1 Corinthians 3:9 (see v.6:1; Mark 16:20)

- Simply put; in the New Covenant in Christ, we have been seated with Jesus; and the work we do, we do with Him in order to build His Kingdom.
- Why did He do this for us? (Look back at Eph 2:7)
 - So that, for all ages He might show us the extreme riches of His favor and kindness.
 - This is what God wanted.
 - "a chosen people" (see 1 Peter 2:9) From Exodus to Revelation, God keeps repeating His desire to be our God and us to be His people.

SONGS

It's not
about us,
it's about
Him!

11. The Older Brother: A Son Living Like A Servant - 15:25,26

DELIVERANCE From the first mention of him, to his conversation with his father, the older brother saw himself as an employee.

"Now the older son was in the field."

- Luke 15:25 (NKJV)

(He was so good, he was out standing in his field! sorry.)
You can almost hear him gripe, "Somebody has to run this place while that kid's out partyin'. Dad's not gonna do it, he's always out cryin' by the road!"

- The other plague of "earned" righteousness is the constant competition, and self-righteousness. "Well, I can't BELIEVE she!..." "I just don't think a Christian should..." "I sure wouldn't wear THAT to church!"
- When you are trying to earn your Father's approval, someone else's blessing is interpreted as favoritism. Look at what he said, "I SERVE thee... but THIS son of thine..." (v.29; "this, thy son" - KJV) In other words, "You like Him best!"

- The older son's attitude was just as prodigal as his

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brother's. He just expressed it differently — work.

"I DO, so why don't I GET?"

Because...

"The just shall live by faith."

— Romans 1:17 (KJV)

* NEITHER son understood what it meant to be a son! We neither have to demand our inheritance from the Father, nor earn it. It is ours by birth, guaranteed by God Himself. (11 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13,14).

— "neither transgressed I at any time..." REALLY?!

I have ten, wonderful, kids, but I knew better than that!

SONGS OF

We neither have to
DEMAND our
inheritance,
nor **EARN** it.

It is ours by birth!

DELIVERANCE

— "you never gave me a goat" again, REALLY?!

Look at verse 12. Pastor Robert Morris put it like this, "and he [the father] divided unto them his living." He divided his living to BOTH of them; but the oldest got

$\frac{2}{3}$ of the inheritance, and the younger brother got $\frac{1}{3}$.

So he actually got MORE."

On top of that, he stayed home, so he wore a robe, ring, and shoes EVERY DAY. He just never bothered to understand what they meant. He had the authority to have a SERVANT cook him up a big, juicy, mutton steak sandwich on Chiabatta anytime he wanted.

...and invite friends!

— "all that I have is thine" (v.31). NEITHER son understood this. Do you? Do you realize that your Father is thrilled to give you the keys to His entire Kingdom?

— Luke 12:32; Matthew 16:19)

— "And he called one of the servants, and asked WHAT THESE THINGS MEANT." All he understood was servitude. When he encountered celebration, he didn't know what that was about. He had to ask a servant!

Are you so busy SERVING God that you don't know how to celebrate Him? Have you ever, as David, danced before the Lord with all your might?

SONGS OF

All that
God has
is yours!

DELIVERANCE

III. Some Observations About BOTH Sons.

1: Neither truly realized how abundant was the life he had, at home, with the Father.

- We have the abundance of a limitless God at our disposal; and His instructions to show us how to get it, enjoy it, and use it to bless others. (Gen 12:1,2)

2: Neither son realized how deep was his father's love for him.

"For God so loved... that He gave."

— John 3:16

Our Father has given us everything we need to live; and to please Him.

"His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness."

— 11 Peter 1:3 (HCSB)

Just get to know Him. Everything you need is a gift. And in 11 Peter 1:4, He gives you great promises; and shares His divine nature with you. We can share God's very nature — think as God thinks. That too, is a gift of God's grace.

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3: Neither son understood the relationship that his father longed to have with him.

* Notice: The Father WENT OUT to meet BOTH sons!

It was always Him seeking THEM.

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

- Luke 19:10 (KJV)

"We love Him because first loved us."

- 1 John 4:19 (KJV)

"Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

- Genesis 3:9 (NKJV)

Our Father, likewise, did all that was necessary to bring us close to Him.

Every year an Old Testament high priest would

SONGS OF

We can share the nature of God as a gift!

take the blood of a perfect lamb into the Holy of Holies. He would pour that blood out on the Mercy Seat, on the Ark of the Covenant.

DELIVERANCE

The fire of God's wrath against sin would consume the sacrifice, and accept the atonement. A pillar of the smoke of God's glory would rise from the sin offering and fill the Holy of Holies. Then, that High Priest would face the congregation, spread his arms, and cry "IT IS FINISHED!"

JESUS WAS LAMB and PRIEST.

In His one sacrifice, He opened for us eternal access to our Father, and intimate relationship with Him.

4: Both sons' love for their father what based on what

he would GIVE them.

- One son TOOK his wealth to please his carnal passions.
- One son DIDN'T take his wealth, and blamed the father for his lack.

Both missed what was REALLY theirs.

They were focused on the wealth they could get instead of the family they were in.

"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."

- 1 Timothy 6:17 (KJV)

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

- Matthew 6:33 (KJV)

Our righteousness was purchased for us by the only One righteous to do so, and presented as a free gift. Anything we try to do to earn or keep it is filthy, and cursed. (Is 64:6; Gal 3:10) So, our place is to rest in His righteousness (Heb 4:9,10), and walk with our Father in the privilege given to us by His grace.

* OK, here's one for the servant:

5: The servant understood better than EITHER son. - 15:27.

"Thy brother is come." He understood the relationship those brothers SHOULD HAVE had. The older brother should have been excited when his brother returned. (Mine, were!)

"Thy father hath killed the fatted calf." You can almost hear the words, "OF COURSE, your father..." "It's your BROTHER, man!"

"because he received him safe and sound." He understood the Father's heart of restoration. He understood the music and dancing. He would LOVE to be EITHER son!

What an amazing Father they had! ...and you have