

April 4, 2021

# CELEBRATING EASTER IN A PANDEMIC WORLD

**"CELEBRATION: GOD'S PRODIGAL LOVE"**

John Greene, *Senior Pastor*

**LUKE 15:11-32 (NASB)**

**INSIGHT:** People want to divorce the moral teaching of Jesus from His supernatural life, specifically His resurrection from the dead.

**INSIGHT:** If you don't believe in the resurrection, don't read 1 Corinthians 13 at your wedding.

**TRUTH:** Everything you appreciate about Jesus came from people who believed that He rose from the dead and who said if the resurrection is a lie, so is everything else.

**CAVEAT:** The 25<sup>th</sup> of this month we're planning a baptism Sunday, offering to baptize at each service.

Possible issues to reject our offer:

1. Why should I get wet publicly?
2. Baptism is supposed to happen after a personal decision to trust and follow Christ.
3. If you were baptized as an infant, that was a good thing but see it for what it was: it represented the faith of your parents.

A couple of corrections to the story of the prodigal son:

1. The main character isn't the runaway son...it's the Father.
2. "Prodigal" doesn't mean runaway. The dictionary meaning is reckless, wasteful. A prodigal is someone who spends till there's nothing left.

**INSIGHT:** "Prodigal" is more about the father because the heart of the story is his reckless love for a wayward son.

**INSIGHT:** The youngest wanted his dad's money but not his dad (v. 11).

**INSIGHT:** Not wanting God in our lives is a picture of sin.

**INSIGHT:** Sin isn't just immoral acts, but at its core, it's the desire to be free of God.

**I. GOD LOVES YOU EVEN WHEN YOU REJECT HIM AND BREAK HIS HEART (vv. 11-12).**

**II. SIN IS FUN FOR A WHILE BUT ALWAYS BRINGS PAIN (vv. 13-16).**

**INSIGHT:** The winds of blessing always change when we run from God.

**INSIGHT:** Sin usually starts great, but the trajectory is to pain and loss.

**TRUTH:** God has a love for you even while you are running away from Him.

### **III. GOD LOVES YOU AS HE BRINGS YOU BACK (vv. 17-20).**

**TRUTH:** No prodigal ever comes home that the Father wasn't drawing him.

**INSIGHT:** You don't see it illustrated as much in the other two stories, but the point declared in story #3 is that it's the Father who is seeking that which is lost.

**TRUTH:** God arranges the circumstances of our lives to draw us to Himself.

### **IV. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO STAY OUTSIDE OF GOD'S LOVE FOREVER (v. 28).**

**INSIGHT:** The religious person who has lived a good life thinks God owes them but has never experienced God's grace and has no relationship with God.

**TRUTH:** The older brother is near his father's house, but he doesn't have his father's heart.

**TRUTH:** Religion cleans you up on the outside without changing you on the inside.