

A Prodigal Father



Luke 15:11-32



Who is this story about?

- 2 similar parables previously:
 - v4-7: focus on the shepherd, not the sheep
 - v8-10: focus on the woman, not the coin
- Begins with a description of the father
- Ends with the father's words



Who is “Prodigal”?

- definition:
 - characterized by profuse expenditure
 - recklessly spendthrift; lavish
 - yielding abundantly; luxuriant
- the son...
- but more so, the father!



The prodigal sons

- The younger son:
 - riches (v12): selfishly took his half
 - pleasure (v13-14): lavished it all on himself
- The older son:
 - service (v29): grudgingly did his part
 - pleasure (v29-30): secretly coveted it
 - toward his brother (v30): anger and hatred



The prodigal father

- with riches (v12): unselfishly gave everything
- in love (v20): yearned for his son's return
- with gifts (v22-24): lavished on a wasteful son
- with riches (v31): again offers everything
- with gifts (v32): lavished on his angry son



Teachers vs Fathers?

- I Corinthians 4:15

- Characteristics of true fathers:

- speak of God's truth & faithfulness (Isaiah 38:19)
- have compassion (Psalm 103:13, Luke 6:36)
- instruct (Proverbs 1:8)
- discipline (Proverbs 3:12, Hebrews 12:7)
- exhort, encourage, challenge (I Thessalonians 2:11)
- give good gifts (Matthew 7:11, James 1:17)



Honoring fathers

- commandment with a promise
(Deuteronomy 5:16)
- by living righteous and wise
(Proverbs 23:24, 15:20)
- the glory of sons is their father
(Proverbs 17:6)



Don't Give Up!

(D.H. Growberg)

"Quit, Give up, You're beaten," they shout at me and plead,
"There's just too much against you now, this time you can't succeed."
And as I start to hang my head in front of failure's face,
My downward fall is broken by my memory of a race.
And hope refills my weakened will as I recall that scene,
For just the thought of that short race rejuvenates my being!

A children's race, young boys, young men, how I remember well
Excitement sure but also fear, it wasn't hard to tell.
They all lined up so full of hope, each thought to win that race
Or tie for first or if not that at least take second place.
And fathers watched from off the side, each cheering for his son
And each boy hoped to show his dad that he would be the one!
The whistle blew and off they went, young hearts and hopes afire,
To win and be the hero there was each young boy's desire.



Don't Give Up!

One boy in particular who's Dad was in the crowd,
Was running near the lead and thought, "My Dad will be so proud!"
But as they speeded down the field across a shallow dip
The little boy, who thought to win, lost his step and slipped.
Trying hard to catch himself, his hands flew out to brace
Amid the laughter of the crowd he fell flat on his face.
So down he fell and with him hope he couldn't win it now
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished to disappear somehow.
But as he fell, his Dad stood up and showed his anxious face,
Which to the boy so clearly said, "Get up and win the race."

He quickly rose, no damage done, behind a bit that's all.
He ran with all his mind and might, to make up for his fall,
So anxious to restore himself, to catch up and to win.
His mind went faster than his legs, and he slipped and fell again.
He wished then he'd quit before with only one disgrace.
"I'm hopeless as a runner now, I shouldn't try to race."



Don't Give Up!

But in the laughing crowd he searched and found his father's face,
That steady look, which said again, "Get up and win the race."
So up he jumped to try again ten yards behind the last.
"If I'm to gain those yards," he thought, "I've got to move real fast!"
Exerting everything he had he regained eight or ten.
But tryin' so hard to catch the lead, he slipped and fell again.
Defeat! He lay there silently, a tear dropped from his eye.
"There's no sense running anymore, three strikes, I'm out, why try."

The will to rise had disappeared, all hope had fled away,
So far behind, so error prone, a loser all the way!
"I've lost so what's the use," he thought. "I'll live with my disgrace."
But then, he thought about his Dad, who soon he'd have to face.
"Get up!" an echo shouted low, "Get up and take your place.
You were not meant for failure here, get up and win the race!
With borrowed will, get up," it said. "You haven't lost at all.
For winning is no more than this, to rise each time you fall!"



Don't Give Up!

So up he rose to run once more and with a new commit,
He resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn't quit!
So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been,
Still he gave it all he had and ran as though to win.
Three times he'd fallen, stumbling, three times he'd rose again.
Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end!
They cheered the winning runner as he crossed the line first place.
Head high and proud and happy, no falling, no disgrace.

But when the fallen youngster crossed the line last place,
The crowd gave him the greater cheer for finishing the race.
And even though he came in last with head bowed low, unproud,
You would have thought he'd won the race to listen to that crowd.
And to his Dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well."
"To me you won," his father said, "You rose each time you fell!"



Don't Give Up!

And now when things seem dark and hard and difficult to face,
The memory of that little boy helps me in my own race.
For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all,
And all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall!
"Quit, Give up, You're beaten," they still shout in my face.
But another voice within me says, "Get up and win the race!"