

July 4 2010. In Dependence Day  
Luke 15:11-32 and Luke 10:30-37

Jesus often taught using parables. A parable is a short simple story intended to illustrate a moral or religious lesson. He employed this technique in order that even the simplest among them could grasp the lesson and that the most intellectually astute would be challenged by the lesson. There are the lingering questions about parables; “are they true accounts of actual events?” or “are they simply illustrative stories made up of everyday experiences?” Answer is yes.

This morning we are going to look at the way Jesus taught, by comparing two of His most well-known of the parables. There is something very interesting about these two stories however. I believe we can see a direct correlation between them. Jesus is emphasizing some “Big Truths in these Small Stories! Truths that are for us today!

READ TEXTS: Luke 10:30-37 and Luke 15:11-32

In the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son we see several direct correlations between the stories.

1. There is a direct correlation in that Jesus does not identify “the man” in either parable.
  - a. “A certain man...” ... so it could have been anybody. Anthropos - man
    - i. Luke records Jesus as began most of his human parables with this non-identity opening... blind leading blind; a man building a house; a certain creditor; a sower went out to sow; if a son ask bread from any father; a certain rich man; a certain man gave a great supper; a certain city had a judge; etc...
  - b. To the Jews this was an unbelievable account because Jesus did not identify the man and therefore did not identify his nationality. Was he a Jew? Was he a Greek? Roman? Palestinian? Roman? Samaritan?
    - i. Identity was paramount in order to know whether or not they should care
    - ii. In biblical times it was taught to love your ‘tribe’ or ‘clan’ and hate your enemy
      1. Much as it is in the Middle East today. “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”
  - c. By refusing to identify the man Jesus was teaching the value of all humanity
2. There is a direct correlation in the destruction (devastation?) of the man and the son.
  - a. The man chose to “go down” to Jericho where he “fell among” thieves (vigilantes - listis).
  - b. The wayward son “joined himself” to the worldly thieves
  - c. Both were left destitute of hope
    - i. The man was left “half dead” – symbolic of the spiritual nature of mankind without Christ – dead in trespasses and sin; needing to be “made alive” by Christ.
    - ii. The son was deserving of death. See Deuteronomy 21: 18-21 “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey... they shall bring him out to the elders of the city... saying ‘this son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard’ ... all the men of his city shall stone him to death.”
      1. The Father ran to greet the son not only as a demonstration of grace and forgiveness, but also to protect him from the men of the city that would have stoned him to death!

- d. Jesus uses the examples of these men's dire circumstances to teach us of the destructiveness of worldliness & sin.
3. There is a direct correlation between the Priest, the Levite; and the older brother
    - a. The Priest – representing the highest religious leadership of the Jews – passed by without helping; the Levite – representing the keepers of the Law of Moses – passed by without helping.
    - b. The older brother showed no concern for his younger brother. He was not watching along with the Father; he demeaned his younger brother “This son of yours!”
    - c. Neither the older brother nor the Priest or Levite cared about the other.
  4. There is a direct correlation in that both the man and the son are restored.
    - a. The man was restored to health by the care of the innkeeper.
      - i. He did not “earn” restoration, yet it was freely given him by the Samaritan.
      - ii. He was given gifts of money for lodging, meals, clothing, medical needs, etc... all that he lost was restored to him.
    - b. The son was restored to the family by the care of the Father.
      - i. He too, did not “earn” restoration, yet it was freely given him by the Father.
      - ii. He was given gifts of...
        1. A Robe – a festival garment. Not a worker or slaves robe, but a robe that covered the evidence of his wandering.
          - a. Jesus offers us robes of white; a covering for our sin
        2. A Ring – A symbol of authority identifying the son as a member of the family and not a slave or hired worker
      - iii. A pair of Shoes – slaves did not own shoes. Shoes indicate FREEDOM!
        - e. **(Jesus was letting us know by the final outcomes of these men, that there is always hope of restoration?)**
  5. **There is a final direct correlation that encompasses the son and the man in that they both declared their INDEPENDENCE and then found themselves IN DEPENDENCE for relief.**
    - a. The man thought himself independent to travel alone to Jericho.
      - i. He would choose his own path and “do his own thing.”
      - ii. Yet he quickly found himself dependent.
        1. Upon the kindness of the Samaritan
        2. Upon the good graces of the innkeeper
    - b. The son thought himself independent to waste his inheritance
      - i. He would enjoy the pleasure of sin... though only for a season.
      - ii. Yet he, too, quickly found himself dependent
        1. Upon the gentle grace of the Father alone
  6. In this life we, too, often declare our independence, yet if we learn the “Great Truths” from these two small parables, we, can’t help but discover our total dependence upon the gentle grace of the Father and the compassion of those with whom He has chosen to place along our path.
    - a. **HAVE YOU PLACED YOUR LIFE IN GOD’S HANDS?**