

This week, we return at last to the Gospel Project and the end of the story of Jacob. If you have any questions about the outline material below, feel free to email me at benjamin.j.williams@gmail.com

Sermon Outline

“Prodigal Jacob”

1. Jacob’s Problem
 - a. Jacob made a mess at home.
 - b. Jacob burned his bridges with Laban.
 - c. Where else can he go?
2. Going Home
 - a. Genesis 32:2-5, Jacob prepares to grovel before Esau.
 - b. Genesis 32:6, Esau prepares a “welcoming party.”
3. Jacob Prepares, Genesis 32:7-21
 - a. Jacob divides his caravan.
 - b. Jacob begs God for mercy.
 - c. Jacob puts together an elaborate bribe.
4. Genesis 33:4 “But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and **fell on his neck and kissed him**, and they wept.”
5. Luke 15:1-3 “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So he told them this parable ...”
6. The Prodigal’s Problem
 - a. The Prodigal made a mess at home.
 - b. The Prodigal wasted his wealth.
 - c. Where else can he go?
7. Going Home
 - a. Luke 15:17-19, The Prodigal prepares to grovel before his father.
 - b. Luke 15:20 “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran **and embraced him and kissed him.**”
8. No Groveling, Luke 15:21-24
 - a. The Prodigal’s rehearsed speech is interrupted.
 - b. The Father claims him once more as a son.
9. The Twist ... Luke 15:25-32
 - a. Can you feel the sympathy of Esau?
 - b. Can you feel the sympathy of God?

Bible Class Outline

Note: Allow room for good discussion wherever it arises and do not feel compelled to cover all of the thoughts below. Think of these as discussion starters rather than lesson plans.

Another Note: Those of you who are especially brave or perhaps having trouble sleeping on Saturday night may wish to read my journal article published in Restoration Quarter titled "Brotherhood Motifs in the Parable of the Prodigal Son."

Key Thought: The joy of homecoming is open to all, but rejecting it is rejecting the Father himself.

1. Note the theme of the three parables of Luke 15.

- a. Joy of finding a lost sheep, Luke 15:4-7 (especially v. 7)
- b. Joy of finding a lost coin, Luke 15:8-10 (especially v. 10)
 - i. Trick Question: Who is the one rejoicing in the moral of these parables?
 - ii. Hint: Who is the person "in heaven" and "before the angels of God"? What if the point isn't just that the angels rejoice, but rather that God rejoices among his angels! Note **Zephaniah 3:17**.
- c. Joy of finding a lost son, Luke 15:11-32 (especially v. 22-24)

2. Joy is essential to a family relationship.

- a. The Father says, "This my son" (v. 24).
- b. The Elder son says, "This son of yours" (v. 30).
- c. The Father then says, "This your brother" (v. 32).
- d. One is trying to create a family relationship, and the other is trying to distance himself from it.

3. Discussion

- a. What is our relationship to the Father if we refuse to rejoice over those He welcomes home? If the Prodigal isn't my brother, is God still my Father?
- b. How do we subtly show our displeasure, disgust, or disinterest in the Prodigals of our community?