

SESSION 1 NOTES

Luke 15:11-32

There are 3 ways to live:

- Looking to God for your salvation
- An irreligious way to be your own savior
- A religious way to be your own savior

While most people see a difference between religion and irreligion, many fail to recognize that there is a big difference between religion and the gospel. If we took a test on salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, we'd probably get 100% on that test. But that does not mean our heart believes it. At our deepest level, our heart says, "If I'm good enough, then I'm valuable and significant, and God owes to accept me."

- Religion is, "I obey; therefore I am accepted by God."
- Irreligion is, "I don't really have to obey anyone but myself."
- The gospel is, "I'm accepted by God at infinite cost to Jesus Christ; therefore I obey."

We see this all so clearly in Jesus' parable in Luke 15 — the Parable of Two Sons. The two sons represent two ways of life. But they both share the same problems.

- Both brothers want the Father's things, not the Father. They were more concerned about the father's things, than his heart.
- And they both found strategies to get what they wanted. One represents the way of self-discovery and self-indulgence; the other represents the way of moral conformity and moral performance. One was spiritually lost far from home; the other was spiritually lost at home.

The parable was given to demonstrate a third, saving way to live.

- ***We need the initiating love of the Father.*** The Father went out to bring in both the younger and the elder brother.
- ***We need to learn to repent, not only of our bad things, but also for the reason we did our good things.*** The elder brother's pride and self-righteousness (i.e., his love of his own righteousness) were keeping him away from his Father's feast of salvation.
- ***We need to see what it cost God to bring us home.*** Restoration was free for the younger son, but at the expense of the elder brother (i.e., the party expenses came from his inheritance). A good elder brother would have agreed and rejoiced; unfortunately, this elder brother didn't. But we have the true elder Brother, Jesus Christ. Throughout His life and at the cross, Jesus paid the expenses for our restoration. We will not stop being either elder brothers or younger brothers in our hearts, until we are moved to the depths by what it cost our true elder Brother to bring us home.