

Church of God Sunday School

PARABLES OF JESUS: THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

As Jesus was teaching in Capernaum (*kuh-PUHR-nee-uhm*), publicans (tax collectors) and sinners drew near Jesus to listen. The Pharisees and scribes murmured against Jesus, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Jesus heard their murmurs. So He told three parables (stories) to show the great love God has for sinners. This lesson tells the last of the three parables.

This story is about a father who had two sons. The younger son is often called the prodigal son. (A prodigal is someone who has been very wasteful, someone who spends foolishly.)

One day the younger son said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Children often receive an inheritance after their father dies, but this son was asking for it while his father was still living. This was a selfish request, but the Father gave both of his sons their share.

In a very short time, the younger son gathered his belongings and left home. Jesus said that the son traveled to a "far country," or a place that was far from home. (Why do you think the son wanted to go somewhere far away from his father?) He began to spend his money quickly and unwisely. Soon his money was completely gone!

A mighty famine came upon the land where the prodigal son was living. A famine is a severe shortage of food. The young man had no money and was very hungry! Jesus said that he "began to be in want."

In desperation, the young man went to work for a citizen of that country. The citizen sent the son into the fields to feed swine (pigs). This must have been very hard for the young man as pigs were considered to be unclean by the Jews. (Read Leviticus 11:7-8.)

However, the son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the husks he was feeding to the swine. It was then that he began to realize how foolish he had been. The servants in his father's house had plenty to eat, while he was starving! The son said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The prodigal was truly sorry for how he had treated his father. He began the long journey back to his father's house. He did not know it, but his father had been watching and hoping for his return. When the prodigal was still a great way from the house, his father saw him. What joy the father must have felt as he ran to his son and kissed him!



The son said to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called

thy son." But the father called for a feast in his son's honor. He told the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet."

Meanwhile, the older son was working in the fields. When he came to the house, he asked a servant what all the noise was about. When he heard that a feast was being held for his brother, he was angry and would not go in the house. His father asked the older son why he was angry. The older son reminded his father how hard he had worked and how he had always obeyed his father, yet no feast had been made for him.

Lovingly, the father told his eldest son: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet [proper] that we should make merry, and be glad:

for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

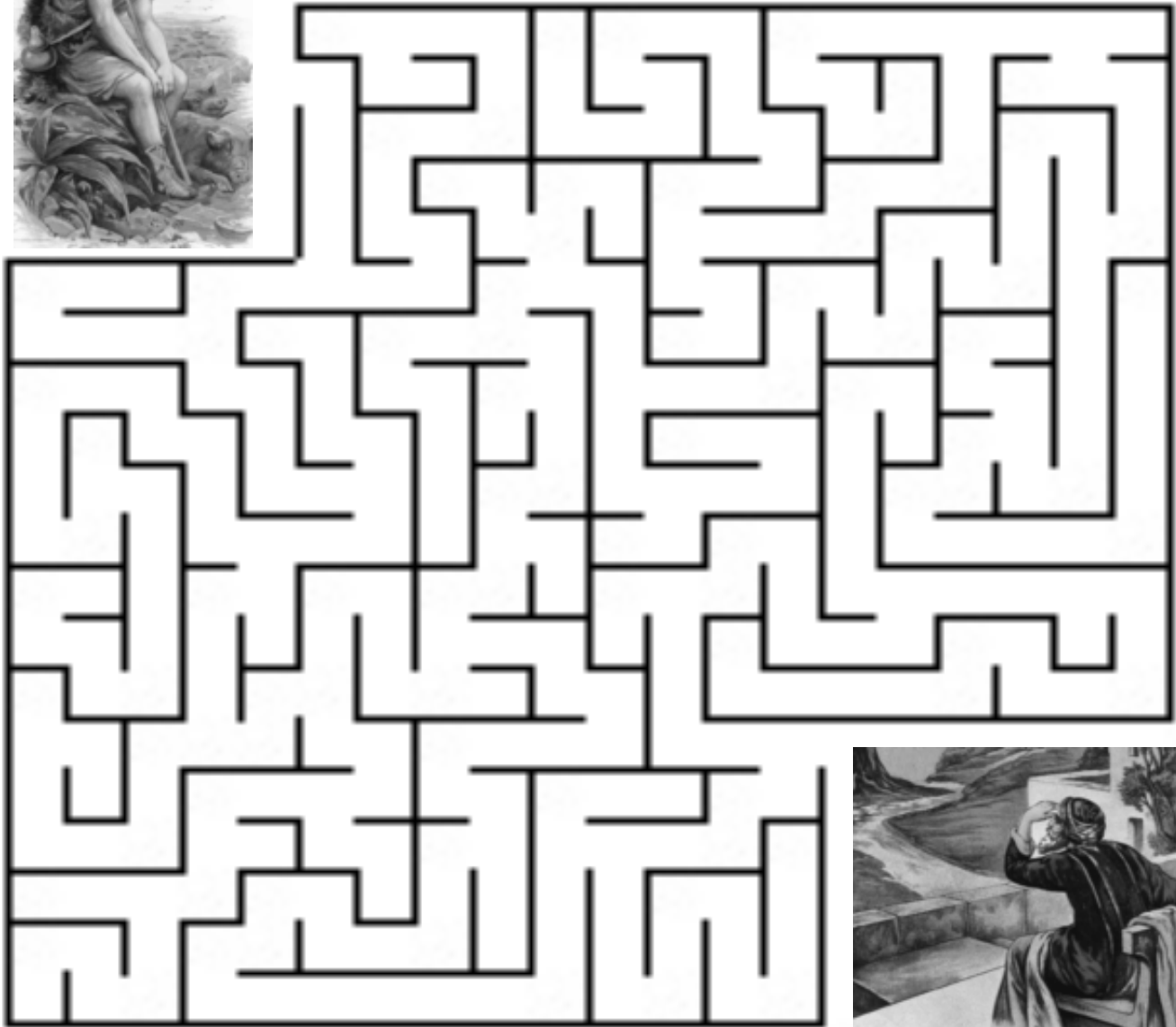
God is like the loving father in this parable. His heart is broken when one of His children leaves the safety of Father's house for the far country of sin. The far country is full of wickedness. When the sinner comes to himself, as the prodigal son did, he realizes what he lost when he left Father's house. As he begins

the journey back home, the loving Heavenly Father is watching for him. What joy the Father feels when a lost sinner comes home!

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*" . . . this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." —Luke 15:32*  
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Guide the Son to His Father



Fill in the Blanks to Complete the Story



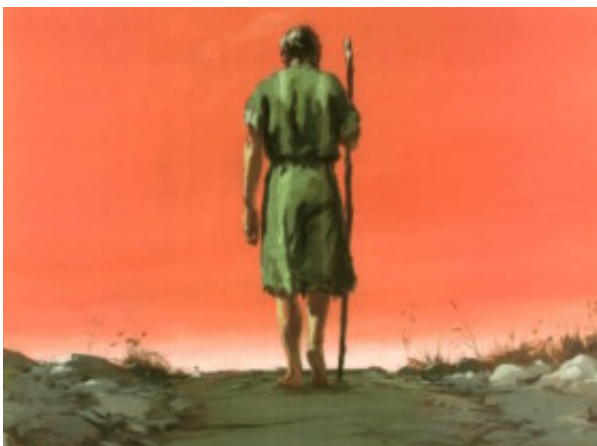
The prodigal son tells his _____ goodbye.



The prodigal son spends all of his _____.



The prodigal son is feeding _____.



The prodigal son is walking _____.



The father forgives his _____.