

Message Summary

Who is the third Son? Many have been wondering who this man is and where He is at in the story. This story is very familiar to most of us and when it is read we only ever see two sons, so where do we see a third Son. Is it the Father? Is it one of the hired hands that the older brother spoke too? No, all of these are great guesses but in this sermon we will see clearly that the third Son is the One telling the story – the Son of God! The message starts all the way back at the beginning, because to see the third Son clearly, we must first compare and contrast His ways with all that we have seen previously in the two sons of the parable.

The first son is the younger brother, the one that rebelled against his father and asked for his inheritance in order to squander it all away on what he thought would bring him peace. This son chose the path of irreligion, better known as rebellion and found that its end is a night sleeping with the pigs in a faraway country. The comparison is beautiful as we take the life of the younger son and contrast it with the life of the third. The first son desired his inheritance, the third Son desired to empty Himself of His (Phil. 2:6-8). The first son travelled to a faraway country seeking to please himself, the third Son also travelled to a faraway country but instead sought the Fathers honor by doing the Fathers will (Jn. 6:38). The first son was clothed in shame because of his rebellion, the third Son was robed in shame because of His righteousness so that the captives of sin and selfishness could go free (2 Cor. 5:21). The first son walked a lonely road home hoping to find forgiveness for his sins, the third Son rose from the dead and was seated at the right hand of the Father on high granting us the forgiveness of sins for all who would trust Him and obey (Phil. 2:9-10). The comparison is made and the uniqueness and value of the third Son is clearly shown.

The second son is the older brother in the story, the one who chose the path of religion and rule keeping. This son just like the first in that both wanted nothing more than the Fathers stuff, yet each one chose a path that they thought would guarantee them their happiness. In comparing the older brother to the third son, we see some interesting similarities but very different motives. The older son was a rule keeper; he was clean cut, obedient, hardworking and always on time. The third Son also kept the rules, for He too was perfect in obedience in all that the Father had given Him to do (Heb. 4:15). The older brother put up with the Fathers presence in order to obtain full control of the Fathers stuff, but the third Son loved the Father and gave away all He had, taking the form of a servant in order to exalt the Father to all people (Phil. 2:6-8). The older son was jealous of the younger's joy, but the third Son rejoices in the joy of others as they receive the love of the Father. So, you can see that these two boys give us great insight of ourselves and at the same time highlight for us some of the most beautiful elements of the third Son – our Lord Jesus Christ!

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.

1. Who is the third Son?
2. The point of the message this week is to compare the characters of the parable to the perfection of Christ. Is this something that we can do with other stories of the bible? Why or why not?
3. Who or what did the two sons of the story really love?
4. In the message it was said that we all have fallen into the trappings of either the older son (religion) or the younger (rebellion). Which is the most tempting to you personally? Which do you think is most tempting to us culturally today?
5. How does seeing the perfection of the third Son help us fight the temptations of rebellion and religion?
6. So many refuse to take wise counsel in that rebellion leads to the pig pin, why do most of us feel as though we must experience it for ourselves?
7. In the message it was said that rebellion leads to animalistic behavior, do you believe this? Why or why not?
8. What does animalistic behavior look like in the life of a rebellious sinner?
9. The older son was a rule keeper, why is rule keeping dangerous?
10. How easy is it to honor God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him (Matt. 15:8)?
11. Why did the older son get angry?
12. What is it about the religious life that creates pride and jealousy?
13. Take a moment and think about all the parallels of the younger son's life to Jesus. Write down anything mentioned in the sermon you may remember or something you see that might have been left out. Jot down any differences and similarities you can think of.

14. Now take a minute and think about all of the parallels of the older brother's life to Jesus. Write down anything mentioned in the sermon you may remember or something you see that might have been left out. Jot down any differences and similarities you can think of.

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for the third Son in the story! And pray for His perfection to continually challenge and change the lives in and around our church!
 - Pray that the Lord would fill CFC with many loving fathers who engage and spend time with their families to the glory of God.
 - Pray that more and more we would see all of the scriptures through the lens of the third Son – our Lord Jesus and His life, death, resurrection and power!
 - Pray that the Lord would use the new Christ Fellowship College class (*How to Understand and Apply the New Testament*) to equip many to know and proclaim the heart of this loving Father.

- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray that our church would become better equipped to teach and lead others into the place where we see all of life through the eyes of our Savior.
 - Pray that our church would be a place that welcomes lost and rebellious sinners, and pray that many lost and rebellious sinners would come through our doors.
 - Pray that our church would find new ways to reach out to those who struggle with religious pride and graciously lead them into the loving arms of our great Father.
 - Pray that through personal discipleship that each member of Christ Fellowship would reach at least one person for the gospel and begin to walk with them through the journey of the Christian life for the glory of God next year.

- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray for the Dream Center that it would become a hub for God's love in that community and that we as a church would reach out and make many disciples there for the glory of God.
 - Pray for Jeff and Misti Fairchild as they transition to Honduras. Pray that the Lord would bless their transitions from Gadsden, training and language acquisition in Mexico, and ministry to reach many with the gospel in Honduras.
 - Pray for the Pinkertons that they would be fruitful in their efforts to evangelize and equip the people of Romania, and that they would have a safe trip home!
 - Pray that the Lord would raise up new people to send out to the nations for the spreading of His gospel so that the world may hear, believe and glorify the name of Jesus!
 - Pray that we all take in, believe and be fully invested in the promise of Romans 15:21 that says

“Those who have never been told of Him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”