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The

Sunday

School

Lesson

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by Rev. Mike Cummings

TEACHING ABOUT

LOSTNESS Luke 15:11-24 Once again we find Jesus surrounded by critical Pharisees and scribes. This time, the issue they raise concerns Jesus' basic purpose

for coming into the world- to

recover the lost. In order to respond to their murmuring. Jesus actually gives three parables which relate to lost-

ness. The three parables also

demonstrate the joy of God in

recovering the lost. The parable of the prodigal son fully answers the criticism of Phar-

THE REBELLIOUS ONE

[vv 11-16] The parable deals

with two sons and their

father. The vounger son is over come by his desire to be his own master. He wanted

independence from his father but later learned that he could

not manage his freedom. He

wasted his wealth in a life

where there was no reference

compared to the reckless and

loveless publicans and sinners

whom Jesus cared much

about. He was in open

rebellion to a life full of the father's presence. He was away from his father's house.

THE REPENTANT ONE

[vv 17-19] This young man fi-

nally saw the needless misery

of his life. He had not captured life with his "living" nor his "leaving" home. He had been turned away from

real life. Notice, it was the

memory of his father's house that worked repentance in his

heart. We know he repented because his attitude toward

himself and his father chan-

ged radically. He saw himself no longer as a son but a

servant. He saw his father no

longer as one to run from but

one to run to. That's repen-

THE RETURNING ONE

[vv 20-24] Notice that the no man had truly repented

because he literally returned

to his father. Godly repen-

tance bring about a return. He

returned with no demand to his father, rather he returned

with a prayer for forgiveness. He didn't ask for his old

privileges that he had destroved. He didn't even ask

for any special treatment at all. He only asked to serve his

father in the capacity as his

slave, quaranteeing for himself a place to eat and sleep in

exchange for his service as a

THE REJOICING ONE The beautiful twist to this

story is seen in the father's

joy at recovering his wayward son. Though his son didn't

deserve nor demand acceptance and restoration, the loving father granted it out of

his consuming love for his

child. Nothing else but re-

lentless love made the prodigal once again a privileged

Jesus also used this story to

speak truth to the Pharisees

whose hearts were not like the rebellious prodigal-they were

worse. They were like the

brother who stayed home, took pride in his prudence and

had no regrets to regard concerning his well- disciplined life. The only problem was that while he lived in the house as a son, he carried the

heartof a slave. The aroma of

his life was filled with the

stench of repugnant selfrighteousness and uncaring

insensitivity toward a brother who needed a lift in life. The real lost one in the end was the one who was not enjoying the warmth of his father,

regardless of what he had or

slave.

child.

God. He could be

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