

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**  
**Chapter 15- Luke 15:11-32**

266- The Son of Man Has Come to Seek and to Save  
That Which is Lost- Part 4

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December 7, 2014

## **Luke 15:11-32**

**11 And He said, "A man had two sons.**

**12 "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them.**

**13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.**

**14 "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished.**

**15 "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.**

**16 "And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him.**

**17 "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!**

**18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;**

**19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'"**

**20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.**

**21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'**

**22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put**

it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet;  
23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;  
24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.  
25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.  
26 "And he summoned one of the servants and *began* inquiring what these things could be.  
27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.'  
28 "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and *began* pleading with him.  
29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;  
30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'  
31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.  
32 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and *has begun* to live, and *was* lost and has been found.'"

To the Glory of God

Now this Parable is one of the most beloved in all of the Christian Faith. It is the single most preached and talked about Parable that Jesus ever spoke. We use this Parable all the time to bring hope to parents who endeavored to raise their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord and yet see one of their children run off into the world to live a prodigal and sinful life. And this Parable is the basis of their prayers to God.

Now normally this is called "The Parable of the Prodigal Son"- where the Word "prodigal" means:

A person who spends money in a reckless and extravagant way

But in actuality- this Parable was introduced by Jesus Himself in verse 11 simply as:

**A man had two sons.**

... where one son was lost and the other always around the Father. So in reality- this Parable here in verses 11-32 is the third of three Parables that Jesus gave in response to the grumbling of the Pharisees back in verse 2 when they said,

**Luke 15:2b**

**... This man receives sinners and eats with them.**

... and these three Parables- the Parable of the lost sheep, the Parable of the lost coin, and the Parable of the lost son is Jesus' explanation as to why He was receiving tax collectors and wicked sinners and eating with immoral people. So the basic Message of this *third* Parable is the very same as the first two:

The Son of Man Has Come to Seek and to Save That Which is Lost

... that is the main Message that you should take away from this entire Chapter.

And, of course, in order to handle the Word of God here correctly- we have had to get into a very deep and precious Biblical Truth called "Sovereign Election" that is found in all 66 Books of the Bible, and which says that in His great Wisdom and Power and Mercy- God chose to "set His Love" upon some of the people who are lost, and God chose to save them, and Jesus died to secure their Salvation, and the Holy Spirit goes out into the world to drag these "elected sinners" to Jesus so He can wash their black hearts in red Blood and make them whiter than snow.

And the beauty of this great Truth is that because God chose to show these unworthy sinners Mercy- it does not matter how sinful they have been- if God has chosen them- they will be saved- which is why Jesus is receiving and eating here with the very worst people in town.

Now this third Parable of the man who had two sons should be considered in connection to the other two Parables and *not* as a stand-

alone Teaching- even though this is how this Parable is normally taught.

Now as you will remember- as we began this Chapter in previous Sermons- Jesus ate with the tax collectors and the sexually immoral people, and He taught them and forgave them- *not* because He was agreeing with their sin- but because God had chosen them for Salvation. And these three Parables in Chapter 15 were given to show that God doesn't pay any attention to natural blood lines or family connections or the attempt by anybody at making themselves attractive to God based on what they do for themselves in, by, and through their own power. And we have seen that it really doesn't matter how sinful a person has been or how long he has remained in that sin- if God the Father has chosen them, if God the Father has set His Love upon them, if God the Father has elected them for Salvation- then God the Son will seek after them and save them.

God the Holy Spirit- Whom Charles Spurgeon called,

“The Hound Dog of Heaven”

... will go out into the world- wherever these elected sinners are- in whatever filth and corruption they are engaged in- and He will drag them to Jesus. He will invade their space, He will impose Himself on them, he will insert Himself into their lives, and He will violate their will and drag them to Jesus- before they want it, before they ask for it, and without them co-operating with Him, and God the Holy Spirit will do this- while they are kicking and screaming the entire way.

And as we have already seen in this mini-series- all that the Father gives to Jesus- Jesus will receive, and He will die for them, and He will wash them and He will forgive them, and he will save them to the utter most. And that is what Jesus is doing here.

And so He gives three Parables-

1. The Parable of the lost sheep (**Luke 15:4-7**)
2. The Parable of the lost coin (**Luke 15:8-10**)
3. The Parable of the lost son (**Luke 15:11-32**)

And Jesus gave us these three Parables and Dr. Luke faithfully recorded them to illustrate why God Incarnate- Who hates sin and will

judge all sin, would eat and spend time with wicked sinners. And so as we have gone through this mini-series- we have seen that two things will always happen when Jesus seeks and saves the lost:

- ✓ All Heaven rejoices
- ✓ Pharisees and scribes grumble

It is inherent in the Character of Heaven that the Act that encourages great rejoicing is the seeking after lost sinners and saving them. And it is inherent in all those who are working so hard to earn their own Salvation and to labor to make God obligated to save them that they resent God's Mercy toward sinful unbelievers, and they despise the Grace of God that rescues the undeserving.

And so as we have seen all through the Gospel of Luke- the enemy of Grace is legalism and the enemy of legalism is Grace. The two are utterly incompatible and they war against each other to the degree that all those who are deceived into thinking that they can do something to earn Salvation will always feel very badly towards those who have been gifted by God to see and understand that there is no good thing in them and who have been blessed by God to have the ability to be the "poor in spirit", and who have been graced by God to hunger and thirst after Righteousness.

We need to understand that Legalism doesn't have to be taught, it doesn't have to be learned- Legalism- in all its various forms and manifestations- is the natural and normal religion of fallen Man- who live in any nation and at any time in human history.

Legalism makes perfect sense to the depraved mind of Man. It was what naturally flowed out from the mind and heart the very moment that Adam and Eve rebelled against God and fell. Please turn with me to see this from **Genesis 3:**

### **Genesis 3:1-7**

**1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"**

**2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**

**3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"**

**4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!**

**5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

**6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

**7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.**

Notice that the very *first* response to being fallen is that the man and the woman tried to do something in their *own* power and through their *own* human intellect and by their *own* human initiative to repair the problem of being fallen and separated from God- in this case it was sewing fig leaves together to hide their outward nakedness. Nobody told them to do this- they didn't go to a seminar to *learn* it- they knew to do this- *instinctively*. So trying to bridge the gap between lost Man and God by what we do for ourselves came to Adam and Eve *naturally* and *normally*- showing that this is something that *all* lost people do as a direct result of being fallen and separated from God.

And this is the nature and character of Legalism- it *rejects* the Grace of God and goes about to repair the problems of Sin and Salvation and Forgiveness and Righteousness through human effort and labor. And this effort manifests itself in various ways:

- "Baptismal Regeneration"
- "Sacerdotal Regeneration"
- "Glossolalia Regeneration"
- "Decisional Regeneration"
- "Acts/Works/Deeds Regeneration"

... instead of what the Holy Bible teaches which is:

Sovereign Regeneration

And other fallen people- who themselves are lost and separated from God, *admire* the efforts put forth by the legalists- they marvel at

all the dedication and effort that people put forth to reach for the stars, and they speak romantically about the effort to *manufacture* salvation and all the work that goes in to raising the level of human righteousness.

But while fallen and depraved minds respect and admire Legalism- God does not. God *despises* it in all its forms and categorically condemns all effort and all labor at attaining Salvation and Forgiveness as being a full frontal assault and insult against the Majesty of Biblical Salvation which is entirely:

By Grace *alone*, through Faith *alone* in the finished Work of Christ *alone*.

The religion of the scribes and Pharisees back then, as well as the religion of the Jews today, is Legalism- the false religion that wars *against* the Grace of God and which fights against the Will of God to save unworthy sinners by Grace and through Faith and not by any works at all. In fact, the Bible is crystal clear as to the reason *why* God saves wicked sinners by His Grace and through the gift of Faith that He gives to them and that reason is given to us in several places like:

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**

**9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

and

**1Corinthians 1:26-31**

**26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;**

**27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,**

**28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,**

**29 so that no man may boast before God.**

**30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**

**31** so that, just as it is written, "**LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.**"

and

### **John 1:11-13**

**11** He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

**12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

**13** who were born, not of blood (human descent) nor of the will of the flesh (human decision) nor of the will of man (husband), but of God.

... God saves sinners *sovereignly*- absent the legalistic efforts by fallen humans so that God will receive all the Glory and we will receive all the benefit.

And so the great mystery is *not* that God didn't choose to save *everybody*- it is that He chose to save *anybody*- since we are all utterly undeserving and unworthy. And to add insult to injury- the ones God *did* choose to save- are usually the worst people in town- partly because sinful living gives people a better insight into Grace, and partly because legalism hardens the heart *against* Mercy and Grace.

And so these three Parables here in **Luke 15** go to that Divine Wisdom and Logic pertaining to Sovereign Election, and that is why we need to spend time in God's Word, dear friends- because the Logic of Heaven- the Mind of God- does not make sense to the mind of Man- precisely because He is Holy and we are radically ruined by the Fall. So in order to try to understand God and God's Way- *especially* as it has to do with the issue of Grace toward unworthy sinners- we need to get into what the Puritans called:

### The Logic of Scripture

... and struggle really hard to *divorce* ourselves from using human logic, and believe and teach what the Holy Scriptures actually say. Because if you are not careful- you will add to the Bible or you will take away from the Bible or you will just make stuff up and you will develop a logic- especially about Grace and Mercy and Salvation and Forgiveness and Righteousness- that is purely Humanistic, and that will always, always,



always lead you into either Legalism or Antinomianism- which is the flip side of Legalism and is lawlessness.

So in these three parables- Jesus is doing at least two things:

1. He is proclaiming the glorious Truth about Salvation by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone
2. He is exposing the futility and wickedness of the Jews' religion (Legalism)

... because there is a Truth about this that we need to understand. It is categorically impossible to receive and believe the Truth about something while holding on to falsehoods about that same subject. You either have to hold on to the falsehood that you already have, or you have to abandon the falsehood and embrace the Truth- but you cannot do both. God made the human mind in such a way that we will either believe the lie or the Truth, but we cannot do both with the same subject at the same time and to the same degree. So the insertion of Truth is the removal of lies. And the degree to which Truth is inserted into us is the same degree to which lies are removed. So the only way to remove false teaching from a person's mind is to subject them to the Truth. And as the Truth does its marvelous work- lies and falsehoods and perversions will all leave.

And that is why nobody can remain neutral about Jesus. You will either love Him or hate Him- because Jesus didn't just talk *about* the Truth- Jesus *is* the Truth.

And the Pharisees had already made their minds up about Jesus. They had already concluded that Jesus was from hell and was a liar and an imposter and a blasphemer. So as they stood before Jesus and heard Him teach pure unadulterated Truth- they categorically rejected what He said, and thus- they kept their lies and falsehoods and deception that they were already steeped in.

So make no mistake about this- dear friends- it is *impossible* to love Jesus and not also- to the same degree- love what Jesus said. To love Jesus is to love what He said and what He did and Who He is. So to reject what Jesus said is to reject Jesus. To deny what Jesus did is to deny Jesus. So there is no such thing as loving the little baby in the manger and not also loving the Man who stands and teaches Sovereign Election- because He is the same Person. There is no such thing as

admiring the Man Who fed the hungry and healed the sick and not also loving the Man Who condemned all false religions and false teaching- because He is the same Man.

So the Parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin and now here in the Parable of the lost son are really the same Parable. They are teaching the very same thing- that God saves those whom he chose to save from before the foundation of the world- regardless of how sinful they may be right now. And one of the hardest realities that these Jews heard in these three Parables is that those who God will save might not even be Jews either.

And as I told you last week- the Parable of the lost sheep *annoyed* the Pharisees while the Parable of the lost coin *insulted* them. But as we will find as we continue to go into this amazing Parable- the Parable of the lost son will anger the Pharisees, and these self-righteous hypocrites are going to make up their minds after they hear this glorious parable- that Jesus must be stopped- even if that means that Jesus must die. Because in their twisted minds- anyone who has drug their cherished legalism through the mud the way this itinerate preacher has done *deserves* death.

Now pause here for a minute with me and ask this question: why did Luke record this Parable? And why should I preach on it? What's the point of this Parable in 2014?

Recently, I read about the Cook County officials near Chicago, who buried 68 bodies in Homewood Memorial Gardens just outside the city. So who were these people? They were people who have nobody that knows them or cares. They're simply numbers on somebody's sheet and they died and the city had to bury them in a pauper's grave. Someone found them on the street or in a park or in an alley or in a run-down building. Some had been dead for weeks.

About 6 months ago- I helped bury a man like this in Wiggins. And the officials search for any living relatives while the Medical Examiner's Office waits and holds the bodies. But more than not- no one comes forward to claim the body. And what is sad is that even if there is a living relative- they usually don't care enough about the one who died to even come to the funeral- much less pay for it.

The funeral in Wiggins was for only one man. And I knew this man because back in the 1980's- I served Jesus with this man for about 17 years. And one night after Prayer Meeting- this man stopped at a

bar and got drunk and became a slave to alcohol. And six months ago- he walked across Highway 49- alone in the middle of the night- drunk out of his mind and was hit by a truck and died instantly.

And so that morning- I drove to the funeral home in Wiggins and I met the funeral director and he told me that he would take me to the grave site. And as we got out- I spotted another man that I knew who at one time served God and yet today does not, and I was really taken back by all this and the funeral director walked up to me and whispered in my ear- *"Could you hurry it up, Pastor- I'm not making any money on this funeral and I can't spend a lot of time here"*. So I prayed and as I began to preach- he walked over and said, *"This concludes our service- you may all leave."* After all- the dead man was just a drunk with no money.

But in Chicago- a one hundred-eighty-foot long trench is dug at the back of the cemetery and the cheap pine boxes are lined up next to each other and they are all buried at one. No stone. No marker. No service. And usually there is no one there to preach or even pray. And while the Medical Examiner told me that this happens in Wiggins about once every three months- this happens every single month in larger cities- with the 20 to 30 unclaimed human beings that nobody cares about.

And what hit me with that one man in Wiggins and the many people in Chicago was the depth of the lostness of so many people in our society. Lost from virtually everybody. Surrounded by millions in Chicago and not a single person seems to know or care when these people die. This seems to me to be great lostness.

But as sad as that scene is- it's really *not absolute* lostness. Absolute lostness is when you are cut off from God. You see, it is *infinitely* better to die unknown by every human in Chicago or Wiggins than to die unknown by God. And if we feel a fearful sense of alienation because of 1 or 68 forgotten people are buried in a mass grave in Chicago, Illinois, or Wiggins Mississippi- how much *more* should we feel the fearful prospect of dying without God?

**Luke 15** is about the Love of God coming into the cities and suburbs of our world to find lost sons and daughters. It's about the identity of Jesus Christ and the very meaning of His Mission in the world- both then and now. It's about a story of destitution at my front door six months ago as the medical examiner asked me to go through

the pockets of the dirty pants of a lost and lonely man who had been crushed by a truck on a highway- in the middle of the night while he was drunk or stoned out of his mind- a man who sang the praises of God for 17 years- a man who prayed on his knees right next to me for almost two decades- a man who- after he became a slave to alcohol- would use me and take advantage of me repeatedly, and yet I always kept trying to sow one more seed into his fogged brain- all the while encouraging myself by telling myself that what I was doing was the heart of God.

So if you ask me what the point is of preaching on these ancient Parables in our day- it is because God wants us to be like Jesus- to receive the wicked people that nobody else wants- the immoral and horrible sinners and to eat with them and to seek and find lost sheep and lost coins and lost sons and bring them home to the Father.

Now I would say that my first aim in preaching about this Parable is that you would see Jesus. Jesus did not end these parables with "Go and do likewise." And Luke did not end this chapter with: "Go and imitate Jesus." So while I agree that we all should be about this business- these Parables are manifestly about what Jesus does- all by Himself.

So the first thing we should take away from these three Parables here in **Luke 15** is: *"Look at Jesus. See Jesus. Consider Jesus. Know Jesus. Learn what kind of Person it is that you say you trust and love and worship. Soak in the Shadow of Jesus. Saturate your soul with the ways of Jesus. Watch Him. Listen to Him. Stand in awe of Him. Let Him overwhelm you with the way He is."*

So that's my first aim. And if I could succeed at just *that*- we would be so permeated with the beauty of this risky, painful, sacrificial, loving way of life, we could not do anything except pursue it.

Now when we come to a Parable like this, it's really critical for us to remember that the Bible is a Middle Eastern book. And it is an *ancient* Middle Eastern book. And that means that its Truths are set in a culture that is very distant from our own. We live in the western world- a couple of thousand years after these events, and so we have little first-hand experience with life in the Middle East- either ancient or modern. And it's all too easy for us to rip this story completely out of its context and to transport it into our modern world and make some applications that are minimalist, at best. But this parable deserves

more than a bare-bones treatment. It is not a story that can be superficially understood as to its richness, and, therefore, its message.

There are nuances, there are subtleties here that are cultural attitudes and features that we must pay attention to- because they give this Parable its full meaning. But as we do that- we must remember that whatever the Bible meant to the people to whom it was written- it means to us today. Whatever Jesus meant to the people to whom He spoke this Parable on that day- is *exactly* what His Words should mean to us today.

But one of the sad realities of our modern world is that we're in a hurry to read the Bible and we rush to apply the Bible without ever really interpreting it. And in the relentless effort to always update the Bible- rather than understand it- we tend to ignore its original context- which hinders us greatly.

So if we are to draw out of this Parable of- the man who had two sons- that which God intended us to know and what He intended to reveal for our edification- it is *critical* that we understand that we must hear it the way the audience of Jesus heard it on that day- and that is why- other than my Message of on the glory of the Incarnation- I am going to spend the rest of this month going over this one single Parable.

You see, in the minds of the people who stood before Jesus on that day- there were ingrained ideas and ingrained cultural attitudes and ingrained patterns and unspoken feelings and sensibilities that were very powerful and that existed in the Middle-Eastern peasant village life. And while we would tend to simply by-pass all of that- these attitudes and feelings and sensibilities are the things that illuminate this Parable. These biases and prejudices and deep seated feelings are the things that make this Parable live and these are the things that will allow us to live in it- which is why we have to try to re-create them.

We must remember that Jesus Christ spoke to a Middle-Eastern peasant people- not to 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans. And all four Gospels basically address people in that context and framework. Even most of the educated people of that time would have their roots in very simple and basic agrarian village life. And much of what went on in their culture and in their social life and what was imbedded for generations in their sensibilities still exist even today in Middle-Eastern peasant life.

So there were things that were felt but never spoken. There were deep attitudes that are never articulated- not even consciously apprehended- because they have been in the subconscious for so long. But if we are to grasp the mastery of this great story and all its spiritual meaning- we've got to at least try to go back and do the best we can to put ourselves in that very place and time. We need to place ourselves in the attitudes and the expectations of a Middle Eastern peasant village culture so we can begin to find the richness of this story being illuminated to our minds.

Now before we look at the story, a bit of background so that we know where we are. At this point in Luke's Gospel account- Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem the very last few months of His life. He is intending to offer Himself as God's perfect Sacrifice for sin, die on the Cross, and then on the following Sunday morning- rise again from the dead- having fully accomplished the redemption of all of God's elect.

So the Lord has been ministering now for nearly three years and preaching the message of the Kingdom of God and repentance, and calling men and women to enter into the Kingdom of God through repentance and faith in Him as the Messiah and the Lord God. And along the way- Jesus has developed some very powerful and relentless enemies- the Pharisees and the scribes.

And as we have studied- these men are basically the architects of the false, legalistic religion of Judaism at the time. They have their influence in the synagogues, which are the local assemblies of Jewish people where they come together to be taught. They are the primary influencing force. They are legalistic. They are corrupt inwardly. They are hypocritical. They are hostile to Jesus. And yet they have the greatest amount of influence, and so you have basically a large group of people who, for the most part, are either violently hostile to Jesus or altogether indifferent toward Him. And that hatred ultimately comes down upon His Head as they scream for His Blood in Jerusalem and endeavor to take away His Life.

Now keep in mind that the resentment of the Pharisees and the scribes is due to the fact that Jesus directly confronted them on their hypocrisy. He identified them as self-righteous to their face and exposed their false religion as being of satan and not of God. Jesus told them to their face that they did not understand the Scriptures or the Will of God, and that- to a man- they did not know God at all. They did not

know the true way of Salvation and they were completely excluded from the Kingdom of God because they were inwardly corrupt and they were headed for Divine Judgment.

And, of course- they didn't take too kindly to that. And even though Jesus said directly and repeatedly- He also said it with compassion and mercy and grace. But regardless of how Jesus said it- rather than be broken and repent- they hated Him all the more for it.

It is absolutely amazing that the one single Parable in all the Bible that gives such hope and that illustrates Grace and the Father's Love for His Own the best- is the very same Parable that incited the greatest degree of animosity and hatred from the religious elite.

And so one of the things that you should take away from this Parable when we complete it is this:

What made the Pharisees despise this Parable the most and what brought forth the greatest degree of animosity toward Jesus Personally- was also the single greatest illustration of the Grace of God toward undeserving sinners

And this is the way it is with legalism, in general. Because legalists are trying so hard to earn their own righteousness by what they do for themselves- inherent in their legalism- is a *belittling* and a *minimization* and an outright *rejection* of the only real and true Cause of our Forgiveness and our Righteousness- and that is the Grace of God.

So here is something to take away with you today. Any religion that has animosity toward Grace is evil. Any teaching that produces jealousy and envy toward the recipients of the Grace of God is of the devil. Any Doctrine that denounces sinners as being too dirty or too evil to be saved is destructive, and any human philosophy that allows God's Grace to be belittled or minimized or outright rejected is not good or noble or pure and should be soundly condemned, and any Belief that allows for a single person on planet earth to think for a single second that Grace is somehow *optional* for him and that he can make it to heaven and stand in God's Presence due to his own level of obedience or some display of human effort- is the very epitome of a doctrine of devils.

And sadly, that is the insidious net result of *every* manifestation of legalism- regardless of what name it goes by. So we must know that Legalism- in all of its forms- is the enemy of the Grace of God, and the

Grace of God- manifested to patently unworthy sinners- is the enemy of all Legalism.

So because we are all sinners, because we are all declared wicked and condemned by none other than God Himself, because there is none who are "good", and because none *deserve* or are *entitled* to either forgiveness or Salvation or Righteousness, and because God is under no obligation whatsoever to listen to or forgive or save a single soul- Grace- God's Amazing, Glorious Grace shines forth is all of its Brilliance and Majesty as we see- like the younger son in this parable- that Grace is the only game in town.

Amen. Let's pray