

Level 1 Lesson 6.

REPENTANCE.

By Don Krow.

Some people have a misunderstanding of what repentance is. Repentance is not perfection but a change in direction. We're going to talk about the parable of the prodigal son, or the lost son. Jesus is telling a story that perfectly illustrates what it means for an individual to repent. In Luke 15:11-12 Jesus said, "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."

The younger son wanted his inheritance before his father died, which is quite unusual, but his father granted the request and gave his sons their inheritance. Verse 13 says, "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." The younger son took all of his wealth, his part of the inheritance, went into a distant country, and wasted it in riotous living. One translation says, "partying and spending the money on prostitutes."

Verses 14-15 read, "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land [The land became destitute and people were starving]; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (brackets mine). He got a job working for a man in that country and was sent to feed the pigs. Verse 16 says, "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks of that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." He was so hungry, at the point of starvation, and he said "Just give me the pig's food—anything," but no one gave him anything. He had squandered all of his inheritance. Verse 17 continues, "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" One translation says, "when he came to his senses." In other words, his father's servants had more than enough food, and he was dying from hunger.

He made a decision; he repented. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of heart that causes a person to turn around and move in a new direction. In verses 18-19, he 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." "Just make me a slave, father. I've sinned against you, squandered your living, and sinned against God. Just make me a slave." Then he rose and went to his father. Repentance is more than just a change of attitude, a change of mind, and a change of heart; it leads a person to act on what they believe, to turn around (or return) and go in a new direction. We've all turned away from God, our Father, and from heaven, our home. The Bible says in Isaiah 53:6 that "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," but God in His mercy took our sins and laid them on Jesus.

The story continues in verses 20-24. "And he arose, and came to his father." One night I was telling this story to a man who had never heard it before, and he just knew that when the son returned, his father would say, "Son, look what you've done. You've wasted all my wealth, all I accumulated in my life. Be one of my slaves." Most earthly fathers would probably be very angry and have an attitude like that, but notice the attitude of this father: "But when he was yet a

great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion [love came out of his heart for his son], and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (brackets mine). They began to have a party.

I once told this to a man who said, "I see what Jesus is saying. If I'll just turn to the heavenly Father for mercy and say 'Father, I've sinned against you, and I'm not worthy to be your son,' He'll accept me." Our heavenly Father will have compassion, and He won't make you a slave. He'll restore you to full sonship with Him. God is waiting. Have you turned away? Why don't you turn to God, your Father, and to Heaven, your home, today?