

Living Waters Chapel
1900 Jay St., Lebanon, PA 17046

~ *SERMON NOTES* ~

Pastor D. Dean Cover
October 12, 2008

SERMON TITLE: *“The Father that Loves You; The Father You Can Trust”*

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:11-32

THEME: Christianity is not based on rules and rituals, but instead it’s based on an intimate relationship with God as your Loving Heavenly Father!

INTRODUCTION: Someone wrote, “God is not a demanding tyrant; he’s a forgiving father. If you’re afraid to confess your shortcomings to God for fear he’ll condemn you or, worse yet, withhold his love from you, you need to know this truth: No matter how many times we fail, God loves us unconditionally. He never treats us as our sins deserve but patiently and wisely allows us to learn from our mistakes.”

We call this the story of the Prodigal Son and because of this we lose the central focus of the parable. He was only one of two brothers, but both brothers were dealing with an estranged relationship from their father. The real central character in this story is the father, not the sons. It really should be called the *“Parable of the Incredible Father.”* Jesus used this story to paint a beautiful portrait of his Father, and this story proves without any doubt that God is like no father you have ever known.

I. GOD LOVES US WITH A LOVE THAT ALLOWS US THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE (vv. 11-19)

A. This freedom to choose includes the freedom to make the wrong choices.

II. GOD’S LOVE IS A LOVE THAT NEVER GIVES UP HOPE (vv. 20-21)

III. GOD’S LOVE IS CONSTANT AND IT NEVER CHANGES BASED ON OUR BEHAVIOR (vv. 22-24)

A. The actions of the father represent his unconditional love

- 1. The kiss represented his forgiveness. The best robe represented the restoration of the son to his relationship as heir. It was a status symbol.**
- 2. The ring was a sign of authority.**
- 3. The sandals were a sign of freedom. Only slaves went barefoot.**
- 4. The feast was the sign of a joyful welcome. This is a picture of grace. Grace being that we receive something we do not deserve.**

B. What’s important in the story is what the Father wanted, not the action of the son. What do you think the father wanted more than anything?

C. The father didn’t want his sons’ obedience, but their hearts.

D. When do you think the father loved his son the most?

CONCLUSION: Most of our lives are spent living less-loved. When we worry that God will ask us for some horrible sacrifice, we live less-loved. When we indulge ourselves in sin, we live less-loved. When we give into anxiety in the crush of our circumstances, we live less-loved. When we try to earn God’s favor by our own efforts, we live less-loved. Even when we get caught up in religious obligations to make ourselves acceptable to him, we live less-loved. Everything about our life hinges on the answer to one simple question. Do we know how loved we really are?