

“Reconciliation”

“Parable of Two Sons”



“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

The main part of this parable, often called the parable of the two sons, is found in 2 Samuel 14: 4-20. It is difficult to understand why this parable is used, and what the results of its usage are. Many authorities have written commentaries on it. Some background information may help us understand it. King David’s personal life had many flaws but David was the one in the lineage of Christ’s earthly ancestry. This wasn’t the first time he had been told about his problems through a parable.

The background for this parable follows his oldest living son, Ammon and heir to the throne, being killed by another son, Absalom. David chose to banish Absalom instead of forgiving him. Joab, David’s servant, thought he needed to forgive his son and bring him back home so he had a woman pretend to be a grieving widow and approach David with her problem through the parable of her two sons. Joab had told her what to say. The woman was asked to dress as a grieving widow and help David see the error of his ways.

In the parable, her sons get into an argument and one kills the other. The people in the town react and want her to have the guilty son killed. Her petition is for the king to help her by having her son’s life spared. She presents the problem as another loss to her. She has already lost her husband and one son. If the guilty son is killed as punishment for his sin she will have no one and the family line will be gone also. David listens to her story and tells her “As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.” 2 Samuel 4:11. But that was only the trap she has been told to set for David.

She asks if she can have one more word. When he permits it, she continues by applying the parable of her two sons to the two sons of David. She tells David “‘Why, then,’ the woman said, ‘have you done this very thing against God’s people?’” 2 Samuel 4:13 She had allowed David to convict himself. The Scripture tells us in this passage that God does not take life away. He always has a way for the sinner to return to the fold. David allows Absalom to return.

Sometimes we wonder why these stories are in the Bible and how they apply to us today. The burden from this parable that was on David can also be applied to us today. Do we accept with forgiveness the eternal life that is given to us, or do we turn our back on God?

There are many levels to the parable. First it is a simple story made up by Joab to make David see the need for him to allow Absalom to return. What does it say to us today? Then it becomes a lesson for David. More importantly, it is a lesson for each of us today about the love, justice, and forgiveness of God.

We all know that God's forgiveness is always there for us. All we have to do is pray. David was willing to have the town people forgive the son of the woman, but he was not willing to forgive his son Absalom. Both David and Absalom had sinned. We sin every day, but we also have to initiate restoring our relationship with God, and sometimes our relationship with other individuals. There is a wonderful assurance of pardon available to us. We can recall the story of Joseph and how his brothers sold him into slavery, but when they needed him, Joseph forgave them. However, they had to be the ones to take that first step.

Prayer: Lord, You know the darkness in our souls. Fill us with love and open to us the treasures of Your wisdom. May we seek Your face and know the peace that comes with accepting Your wisdom and love. Amen

1. How can we apply this story to our life?
2. Was Joab right in making up a story and asking the woman to lie?
3. Why is it so hard to see someone else's faults and not our own?
4. What assurance do we have that our sins are forgiven?

The Parable of the Two Sons

“And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, ‘Help, O king.’ And the king said unto her, ‘What aileth thee?’ And she answered, ‘I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth.’ And the king said unto the woman, ‘Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.’ And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, ‘My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless.’ And the king said, ‘Whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.’ Then said she, ‘I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son.’ And he said, ‘As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.’”

Then the woman said, 'Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king.' And he said, 'Say on. ' And the woman said, 'Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.' 'For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him. Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid' or the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid said, 'The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.' Then the king answered and said unto the woman, 'Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee.' And the woman said, 'Let my lord the king now speak.' And the king said, 'Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?' And the woman answered and said, 'As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.'" 2 Samuel 14: 4-20.