



3. It is a relationship **TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO**

February was a difficult month for me. Two very close friends spent time in hospitals separated from friends and family battling COVID 19. It turned out to be a time to reflect for them, their family members and me on what really mattered.

In a recent article in the Times of India, doctors revealed what occupied the minds of many dying patients. It was a yearning to correct relationships with loved ones. Apart from this for many of us the anniversary of separation with our loved ones due to COVID 19 is fast approaching.

This week we will reflect on one of Jesus' very well-known parables that deals with separation and reunion; love and forgiveness. The very elements that lie at the heart of Christianity. Its popularly known as "The Prodigal Son," or the "The Lost Son." I personally feel we should call it the "Parable of the Loving Father."

When the Pharisees complained that Jesus was welcoming and eating with sinners and the detested tax collectors Jesus tells them three parables this is the third one.

"A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, before you die.' So, his father divided his wealth between his sons. "Soon after, the younger son packed all he had and moved to a distant land. There he wasted his money in wild living. When his money ran out, a severe food shortage arose in the country, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. The hungry young man longed to eat what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything.

"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have more than enough food, and here I am starving to death. I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, and I no longer deserve to be called your son. Please take me as a hired servant."' So, he returned home to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and filled with love and compassion, he ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him.

The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So, they began to celebrate.

While this parable is short, simple and needs no explanation, let me make a few comments on it.

This parable contains the heart of the Christian message. It is the very Gospel of Jesus Christ or in other words means the "Good News of Jesus Christ." It is a strong message of hope, grace, love and forgiveness of God available to everyone, irrespective of who they are and whatever they have done against God and man.

God is the Loving Father in this parable and we are the prodigal and lost children whom He unconditionally loves, longingly waiting for our return He readily forgives when we realize folly and return to Him.

Jesus' response to the religious institutionalized religion is clear when He responds to the establishment represented by the Pharisees. Jesus makes it clear that Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship. A strong and loving relationship.

What is it that made the son decide to return home? Very simply put, the mere memory of his father's goodness that he had witnessed and experienced. The same holds true for each one of us. As you watch this video, do you feel your life has gone so far away from God that you can't return to Him? Just delete the thought and remove it also from your recycle bin.

There is nothing you could have done or can do that will make God love you less.

On behalf of Jesus, I invite you to come home to Him. You don't need to even need RSVP this invitation. Just tell Him I am back. He is waiting for you.

In the parable of the Prodigal or extravagant Son we see God the Father patiently and longingly waiting for His son to return, that is just one side of the story. The two parables that Jesus tells before this the one of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin we find the other side. God doesn't just patiently wait, He also actively seeks and comes after His lost children and carries them back with joy.

Our Father in heaven initiated the greatest rescue mission ever seen, which reveals He is the Prodigal or extravagant Father. John puts it in his gospel, "God so loved the world (that is you, me and everybody else) that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Let's believe in Jesus and begin or grow our relationship with God. Yes, Christianity is not a religion but a relationship with Christ.

God bless us all.

CONNECT WITH US

- Ask questions: bystillwaters.always@gmail.com
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/JaywantMichael>

This study guide was prepared by Jaywant Michael