

Crossville Church of Christ

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Dale Hennessee
Mike Isaacson
David Kerley
Doug Loveday
Greg Maxwell
Don Napier
Tom Parham
Mark Roberts
Roger Smith
Jason Wyatt
Jerry Wood

Ministers:

Barry Kennedy
Ken Mears

Missionaries: (India)

Don Iverson
Jim Waldron

Service Times

Sunday Bible Study	9 AM
Sunday Worship	10 AM
	6 PM
Wednesday	6 PM

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Ladies Bible Class	
Tuesdays	11AM
Prayer Meeting	
Tuesdays	10 AM
Joyful Generation (Youth Devotional & fellowship)	
1st Sunday	7:00 PM

COMPASS

Using God's Word to Chart The Course
Of A Congregation

www.crossvillechurchofchrist.org

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November 8, 2015

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalm 1)



THE THREE GIFTS: A ROBE, A RING, AND SHOES (RESTORATION HAS ITS REWARDS) pt 2

Barry Kennedy

Continuing our study of the three gifts now consider: **THE RING, RESTORING THE GIFT OF AUTHORITY** When Jesus introduced the prodigal son, He described him as one wanting to be in control of his inheritance. It was not good enough for this son to be under the watchful provision of his father. He, as do many today, felt that he knew how to handle his own life better than did his father. He wanted to be free and to be the master of his own destiny. That brings to mind teens lashing out at their parents with the words “You just don’t understand!” There is an old saying, “You don’t know what you have until it is gone.” This statement fits the authority that the prodigal son had lost and finally regained.

The father of this parable is pictured as a wealthy man of great substance (Luke 15:17). No doubt the servants of his house would have viewed the master’s two sons as their superiors as well; however, that was not enough for the prodigal. He wanted to be the master of his own life. He, like many, only saw what he could not do, instead of the opportunities that lay before him. If the prodigal son could have known that he would see himself starving and slaving in a hog pen would he have been so eager to ask for his portion? Would he have taken his flight so recklessly into the far country? Sadly, these questions are not as easy to answer as one might think. Consider, for example, how many Christians know that the Bible says,

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

It may be that a lot of people know this to be true but, many reading this manuscript likely know of brothers and sisters in the Church who are guilty of such sins. It is often said that they know better. This may be so, but that does not change the fact that they have turned the reigns of their lives over to the master of darkness. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

Satan wants man to believe that he has no choice but to sin. Often Satan gains ground with God’s people through the despair brought on by one’s inability to be “sinless” or “perfect.” John proved that no man can claim sinless perfection when he wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Does this mean that everyone should say that there is no hope, just give up, or just “throw in the towel?” Of course not, God simply wants man to realize his great need. Jesus said, “They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick” (Luke 5:31). Clearly Jesus was referring to the spiritual healing He came to provide (Luke 19:10). The apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through (emph. Mine BK) Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

The fact is that God does offer man the authority to overcome temptation. Of course, that authority comes from His word. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God’s word illuminates the path of the child of God. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). Light commands its authority over the darkness’ likewise, the word of God commands authority over the darkness of sin. Christians are translated from the power (i.e. authority) of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13).

>>>Over>>>

The Prodigal son had given his authority over to Satan and found the bitterness that goes along with a life of sin. When he “came to himself” in the hog pen he realized that he had to make some changes. He needed to be restored, but he realized his actions placed him in a position unworthy of being called the father’s son. Through all this the father placed a ring upon his finger. Of all three gifts, this ring is likely the most unexpected gift of all. One can clearly see the need for shoes and vesture, based upon the dire conditions in which the boy had placed himself. Many people would be willing to clothe the needy. For one to place a ring upon the hand of that same person might be a different story. This father was letting his son know that he was not only forgiven, but his authority as the master’s son was also restored. God’s forgiveness is complete, matchless, and overwhelmingly beneficial. Imagine where man would be today if his forgiveness were based upon the way man forgives. The way man forgives is often said this way, “I’ll forgive you, but I’ll never forget what you did.” Man might also say, “I forgive you, but only after I get even.” God’s forgiveness does not in any way resemble such. “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 8:12).

The ring on the prodigal son’s finger symbolized the true restoration of a soul that has been returned to his place in the home. No one would doubt his authority anymore, and they would have to answer to the father if they failed to respect his position. In fact, the older brother’s spiteful statement of “this thy son” (Luke 15:30) was answered by the father with “this thy brother” (Luke 15:32). Though one cannot accept everything Charles Spurgeon wrote, his words concerning the ring on the prodigal’s hand are worthy of consideration.

Then came the ring, a luxury rather than a necessary, except that now he was a son it was well that he should be restored to all the honours (sic) of his relationship. The signet ring in the east in former times conferred great privileges: in those days men did not sign their names, but stamped with a signet upon wax, so that the ring gave a man power over property, and made him a sort of other self to the man whose ring he wore (Spurgeon p. 400).

Spurgeon continued by adding that the ring was a complete answer to the part of the prodigal’s confession. “I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Luke 15:21). To this the father said, “Put a ring on his hand” (Luke 15:22). His condition was changed from the muck and mire of sin to the lofty elevation of the master’s son, and from the servant of the hog pen, to the authority of the ring bearer. This is an example for brethren even today. Those who are walking in darkness and are in need of corrective discipline must still be respected as brethren.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (2 Thessalonians 3:11-15).

The bottom line is, if man is not willing to forgive his fellow man who repents, God has promised that He will not forgive him of his own transgressions. “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15).

The prodigal son is not just some feel good story used to help keep children occupied in Bible class. This parable reveals to man God’s strong desire to save, His willingness to restore relationships, and His faithfulness to man even though man often leaves God behind. Some may be asking, “Will the Father allow me to wear his family ring?” Can anyone truly come away from a study of the prodigal son and not see himself referenced in the story? There is a reason the Holy Spirit gave Luke the authority to write these words. The question is, “What are we going to do with them?” (T.B.C.)