The Search For Happiness

Greg Kline · Luke 15:1–32

INTRODUCTION

- This morning I want to discuss the idea of a search for happiness. Because that is what the prodigal son does.
- God reveals his method for true thankfulness, for true contentment, for actual happiness and peace. Is found only one way and one alone.

1 Details Matter: Why Jesus Told the Parables

Luke 15:1–2; Luke 15:3–7; Luke 15:8–10

- Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.
- And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, This man receives sinners, and he eats with them.
- There is not a single bad person left in these two parables Jesus has told.
- The prodigal son is the only story that involves someone who ends in this chapter in a negative fashion, and it's not the person we think.

2 The Younger Son Looking for Happiness in the Wrong Places

Luke 15:11–24

- Not many days later the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey into a far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living.
- Did you notice that the younger son was looking for happiness in all the wrong places at the beginning of the story?
- If I can get out of my father's shadow, if I can have my inheritance already, if I travel, if I get far away from home, then I'll be happy.
- If we remember that we're stewards of what God has blessed us with, then could it not be said of me too that I have been squandering what is God's in reckless living?

3 Nothing in This World Provides Peace

1 Timothy 6:6–10

- We have to know that nothing in this world provides peace.
- Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.
- If you live for money, it will separate you from God.
- Comparing ourselves to others not only will not lead to happiness, it leads to, like the love of money, complete destruction and despair.

4 Serving the Father Is the Only Way

Romans 6:15–19

- We have to realize that serving the Father is the only way.
- You can choose to be my slave or a slave of sin. We are all slaves.
- If you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness.

5 The Older Son: The Unhappy Soul

Luke 15:25–30; 1 Corinthians 13:1–3

- The older son, beginning in verse 25 of Luke 15, is the only person, place, or thing in this entire chapter that ends in a negative fashion.
- He is the jealous son. He is the unhappy soul.
- Unhappy souls are those who don't rejoice with others, who don't see the picture that God tries for us diligently to see.
- If I give away all that I have, if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- Unhappy people are unhappy because they're constantly focused on self, and there is no joy, peace, and love in being selfish.

6 The Patient Father

Luke 15:28–32

- When the older son was angry and refused to go in, notice what his father does. His father likewise went out to him. He pleaded with him.
- Why was it fitting to celebrate? Because what was dead is alive, and what was lost is now found.
- If we're searching for happiness, we not only have to look outside of ourselves and look to God. We have to look to others as well.
- And the wonderful message of love is the father took him back.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **Our challenge in happiness is not one that says, How many good things can I do until God will reward me? But a disposition that says, Without God I have nothing.**

MY NOTES