

Reckless Sons

The Lord Jesus used parables to reveal and teach truth. He effectively cut the hearts of men with each lesson - emphasizing different spiritual principles illustrated by a variety of parables expertly told. Audiences made their choices. Some hearers received His words of truth; others rejected it. Parables always accomplish what they are intended to do.

Two parables of Jesus describe a father having two sons (Matthew 21:28-32; Luke 15:11-32) - sons who are very different in their actions and reactions. Perhaps, as Jesus tried to clear the clutter of people's thoughts, He summed up the character of men into two groups: two sons. Which son have we been? Which one are we?

Recklessness is the state of mind, heart and body that is careless and irresponsible, not regarding the consequences of one's choices or actions. Generally, such a person is rash, hasty in word or deed. Are men reckless toward God the Father? Of course, they are. Jesus drove that point home when He told parables of two sons.

"A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered, 'I will not'..." (Matthew 21:28-29). Disrespect and selfishness permeate this son's response to his father. Have we ever done similarly? Probably. At the core of our own sins is selfishness, pride and stubbornness. We are being reckless when we choose not to do what the will of the heavenly Father is.

In the other parable the younger son demanded from his father his share of his inheritance. The father divided his wealth between his two sons. *"And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living."* (Luke 15:13) Wanting to be on his own, experience life, see the world, the son recklessly left his father, not at all considering what could happen - what did happen when a severe famine hit, and he ran out of money. Man is granted the shelter of God's righteousness, but he wastefully and carnally mishandles life's blessings. Sin is deceptive, and we know it, but man is ensnared by it constantly. The so-called "good life" the world offers us is empty - a thief cheating us of true goodness and leaving us with nothing in the end.

Although sons can be reckless - and many of us have been - recklessness does not have to be who we end up being. The son who said *"I will not"* regretted what hastily flowed out of his heart and mouth, *"and went"* (Matthew 21:29). He obeyed and did his father's will. Who has never said anything hastily about what they will do or not do? But then, they reconsidered and did the right thing. Are we not all to be doers of our Father's will (Matthew 7:21)?

The reckless son who was wasting his life, (not just his inheritance), on worldly and immoral living, came to his senses and turned away from his irresponsible lifestyle. *"I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight'"* (Luke 15:18). He truly repented, just as we all must (cf. Luke 13:3). Repentance is a decision to change one's ways that includes a recognition and confession of wrong done - not blaming others; a response of taking the proper steps necessary to return home; and a commitment to serve the Father - not oneself - by doing His will. The heavenly Father longs for all reckless sons to come to repentance (cf. 2 Peter 3:9) so that He may compassionately welcome them into the joy of His fellowship.