

## HOME: The Prodigal

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### Sermon Synopsis

In this World Impact message from Oral Roberts University, Dr. Billy Wilson invites listeners to rediscover the love of the Heavenly Father and return to Him. Speaking to those who feel lost, broken, or far away from God, he draws from Luke 15 and its parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son to show God's persistent pursuit of His children. The central assurance of the sermon is that no matter how far one has wandered, God's love remains constant and ready to restore.

The message is enriched by the perspective of Dr. Haley French, a counseling professor at ORU, who connects the parable's themes with modern struggles. She points to the cultural emphasis on instant gratification and shallow connections, which leave many isolated. Dr. French also reflects on the prodigal son's brother, whose resentment highlights the complexity of family dynamics. Her insights encourage the church to respond with empathy and presence, walking alongside people in their struggles rather than judging or offering quick fixes.

A testimony from Dan Lee provides a vivid example of God's restoring power. Raised in church but later facing illness, addiction, and rebellion, Dan experienced a dramatic turning point during a mission trip to Sri Lanka. His encounter with God led to repentance, sobriety, and renewed purpose, illustrating how God can redeem even the most broken story.

Dr. Wilson further illustrates the theme of returning home by drawing from the natural world, describing the homing instincts of pigeons, whales, and salmon, as well as the story of a cat that traveled extraordinary distances to reunite with its family. These examples underscore that God has placed within each heart a longing to return to Him. To guide that journey, Dr. Wilson outlines practical steps modeled after the prodigal son: recognize the situation, remember one's identity, return to the Father, repent, and receive His embrace.

The sermon concludes with encouragement for both prodigals and those who remain faithful: God welcomes the wandering with joy, and He continually offers blessing and presence to those who abide in Him. The overall message is one of hope—that God’s love transcends distance, failure, and pain, and that every broken heart is invited to come home.

## Sermon Highlights

- God's heart is passionately seeking the brokenhearted and lost, ready to welcome them home with open arms, as illustrated in Luke 15 with the lost sheep, the lost coin, and especially the prodigal son.
- The journey back to the Father involves recognizing our lost and broken state, remembering our identity as God's children, returning to Him, repenting (changing our mind), and receiving His loving embrace.
- Far from being a distant or judgmental Father, God eagerly runs to embrace us when we decide to come home, celebrating our return with joy, restoration, and full acceptance as His sons and daughters.
- The story of the prodigal son also challenges those 'at home'—faithful believers—to understand God's generous heart extends blessings to all His children, inviting continual celebration and grace.
- True healing and restoration come through relationship with God and others, requiring vulnerability, repentance, and the power of God’s love to transform even the deepest brokenness into a message of hope and new life.

## Scripture Verses

### Psalm 34:18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

### Psalm 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

### Luke 15:4-7

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

### Luke 15:8-10

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

## Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

## Quotes

- "Where do broken hearts go? Absolutely, God wants to help you get home. He loves you today. Receive his love." - Dr. Billy Wilson / Whitney Houston
- "If you're away from God today, recognize that you need help. You're spiritually hungry. You don't have to feed your life, your spirit, on the things of the world." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "When you're away from God, if you'll just turn and make steps toward him, he'll run to meet you, he'll help you, he'll give you his grace, and he'll welcome you fully home." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "Repent means to change your mind. Something happened to the prodigal son in the pigpen. When he realized where he was, he recognized the situation, he remembered the father's house, and he begins to turn toward home." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "The truth is the story in Luke 15 is about the Father. He loves every child. He loves the one that's away from him and he wants him to come home, and he loves those that are close to him and wants us to have everything that he has for us." - Dr. Billy Wilson

# Daily Devotionals

## Day 1

### Scripture Verse

Psalm 34:18 - "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

### Reflection

Have you ever felt utterly lost, like a broken heart wandering in darkness, uncertain where to turn? The Lord's promise in Psalm 34:18 is an anchor for the soul: He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit. Dr. Billy Wilson's message reminds us that no matter how far we have strayed or how shattered we feel inside, God's heart yearns to bring us safely home. Think about the prodigal son — a young man who demanded his inheritance and scattered it, only to find himself feeding pigs, hungry enough to eat their food. This story is not just about folly but about profound brokenness and redemption. It mirrors the moments when we are trapped by our mistakes and heartaches, feeling the stench of our 'piggens,' far from the Father's love. Imagine a homeless person in a bitter winter night. They might feel invisible to the world but never to God. Like that person, your pain is never unseen or unvalued. God reaches out when the world turns away. He does not wait in anger but runs to embrace you, as the father did to his prodigal son, rejoicing that you are found. Dr. Haley French's words about the need for meaningful, reciprocal relationships reinforce that we were never made to walk alone. When you feel isolated by your struggles, remember God is your eternal friend and loving Father, yearning to restore your spirit. This restoration is a journey — it begins with recognizing your brokenness and trusting God's nearness. In a real-life example, consider Dan Lee, who faced a devastating cancer diagnosis, lost his way in pain and addiction, but found his way home through a divine encounter. His story challenges us: no matter how deep the fall, God's saving grace can restore and renew. Pause and ask yourself: Where do my broken heart and crushed spirit go today? To the Lord who is close, who heals, who saves. The journey to home begins when you lean into His loving arms.

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come before You broken and in need of Your healing touch. Draw me close to Your heart, mend my shattered spirit, and lead me home into Your loving embrace. Thank You for never letting me go. Amen.

## Day 2

### Scripture Verse

Luke 15:20 - "So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

### Reflection

Have you ever felt the sting of estrangement or the burden of knowing you've disappointed those you love? The prodigal son's story unfolds in the most tender way in Luke 15:20 - the father's heart overflows with compassion even before the son arrives home. This verse reminds us of the Father's unrelenting love—a love that pursues us even when we wander far, when our choices lead us into darkness. The father doesn't wait for a perfect apology; he runs, embraces, and restores. The warmth of home is not earned; it is God's free gift to every repentant heart. In your own life, have you experienced that moment when you took the first step back toward God after a season of rebellion or distance? That first step is always the hardest—the moment when pride fights vulnerability, and fear battles hope. But the Father's heart is ready and waiting to celebrate your return with joy. Remember Dr. Wilson's practical steps: recognize your situation, remember your identity as God's child, and return — just go home. Returning is an act of courage and surrender. It requires humility to say, 'I need You, Father.' Think about Howie the cat, who traveled a thousand miles through harsh wilderness just to get back home. Your soul's journey may be long and arduous, but the magnetic pull of your Father's love will never fail. He sees you from afar, knows your struggles, and eagerly awaits your coming. No matter how broken or lost you feel, your Father's arms will welcome you immediately. You don't have to wait to be perfect or worthy. God's love chases after you like nothing else in this world. Today, reflect on your own steps home and the Father's ready embrace.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank You for Your unrelenting love and mercy. Help me to take the first step in returning to You today. Let me feel the warmth of Your arms and know that I am welcomed as Your beloved child. Amen.

## Day 3

### Scripture Verse

Luke 15:24 - "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

### Reflection

The celebration rings out in Luke 15:24, a profound declaration of restoration and new life: 'For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' What a promise for every soul that has wandered! The Father's heart celebrates our redemption as a victory far greater than any other. Imagine receiving bad news that shakes your very foundation, like Dan Lee's diagnosis of leukemia. Life may feel shattered, your spirit crushed, and your path uncertain. Yet, in his story, we see the glorious power of God to redeem, restore, and celebrate transformation. Like Dan, your life can become a great message of hope that testifies to God's saving power. As believers, we are called not only to rejoice over our own restoration but to reflect the Father's joy for others who come home. Dr. Haley French reminds us there is often a 'brother' in our hearts—those who stay close but wrestle with feelings of hurt or unfairness when grace abounds to others. Let this serve as a time to embrace God's grace fully, both for yourself and those around you. Grace breaks chains, heals relationships, and invites us all to celebrate together. The Father's celebration reminds us that our worth is not tied to performance or keeping score. The gift of being 'found' is complete and unmerited. God's love is lavish and welcoming—always ready to clothe us in His best robe and ring of belonging. Take this day to examine any barriers to fully receiving God's celebration in your life. Are there fears, guilt, or doubts that hold you back? Remember the Father throws a party for you. You are the cherished child, worthy of love, healing, and abundance. Where do broken hearts go? They come home to a God who saves, restores, and rejoices endlessly over you.

### Prayer

Father God, thank You for the joy of being found and made alive in You. Help me to fully receive Your grace and to live in the freedom and celebration of Your love. May my life be a testimony of Your redemptive power. Amen.

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