

Let The Bible Speak Series

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When He Came To Himself

Good morning and welcome to Let The Bible Speak. It's a real pleasure to have you with us today. I want to thank you for tuning in. In Luke 15:17 we read of a young man who had wasted his inheritance in a foolish way. We are then told "But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." That is, when he saw himself as he was, his frailties and perverseness on the one hand and his better self and nobility on the other. We commonly refer to this young man as the prodigal son. It's always a tragedy to learn the hard way. It's expensive tuition. It certainly was for this young man. He not only had lost sight of his Father, home and family, but he had lost sight of himself, his reason, his better nature and all that constituted him a man. He pictured himself a capable, enterprising, independent young man who could manage his own affairs successfully and make his mark in the world, if only he were free from the restraints of home. When given the chance to find out, plus his share of the inheritance, the enterprising young man became a vile sinner, a pauper, a starving enslaved feeder of swine. It was in the pig-pen where he came to himself. He made a real discovery. Self-knowledge opened his eyes to himself. He knew who he was, and what he had done. The young man of our text is not the only person who failed to know themselves as they should. There are others, among them

1. David, one of the all time greats who marked his life with a failure to see himself as he was. He fell in love with a soldier's wife who lived near the palace. She became pregnant with his child, so he ordered the captain to place the soldier in harms way, so that he would be killed. He then married the woman. The Lord was displeased with this and sent Nathan, who related the following story to David. (Two men in one city, one rich had many flocks and herds, the other poor had only one little ewe lamb. Traveler came to the rich man and he spared to take of his own flock, but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man.) David's anger greatly kindled. "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this, he shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no pity." 2Sam. 12:5,6 "And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man"

David looked deep into his own heart, and discovered himself. He saw the real David and he confessed his sin when he said "I have sinned against the Lord." 2Sam. 12:13

David saw himself for what he was, and it greatly troubled him. His sin was like a shadow that hung low over him, a constant reminder of his weakness and failure.

2. The Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray did not see his true state either (Luke 18:10-14). He actually went there to brag on himself. He not only told God how good he was, but even thanked God that he was not like the poor, downcast publican who stood afar off. The publican, on the other hand, had a different view of himself. He wouldn't even lift his eyes to heaven but prayed "God be merciful to me a sinner." That was the difference between one who saw himself as he was and the other who did not.

3. Churches often make this mistake.

They see themselves as the bastion of truth, a citadel of the faith, an anchor of righteousness, when in reality they are far from that. So was the church at Laodicea, who had a grossly perverted view of

themselves. (Rev. 3:14-17) Listen to their appraisal "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

But the Lord had a different view and declared that they were wretched, miserable, poor blind, and naked. What a difference in perspective. There are also some in the Bible who did see themselves for what they were and what they had done.

1. The Chief butler made famous by Joseph and his dreams. He failed to remember Joseph when he was restored to his position with the King. He said "I do remember my faults this day" Gen. 41:9

2. Isaiah got a more vivid and realistic picture of himself when he saw his sinful nature in contrast with God's holy nature. His view of himself was too high until he saw the glory of God, and then he exclaimed "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips" Isa. 6:5 Undone! So are we all. Paul said "Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended...I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" Phil. 3:13-14.

3. Peter found himself out in the most painful way. He really believed he was beyond denying Christ. "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus said unto him verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" Mt. 26:33-34. But Peter had a higher opinion of himself than this and said "Though I should die with thee, ye will I not deny thee." But he did. And when the cock crew, he remembered the word of Jesus and "went out and wept bitterly." Peter was warned by Jesus of the weakness within him, but he would not believe it until he went on to find out for himself through base denial, falsehood and cursing, the enormous possibilities of waywardness that dwelt within him. No wonder Paul wrote "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The Problem of Self-Deception

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jere. 17:9 One of its deceits is to hide its own deceit and thus prevent a man from discovering himself. How does deception keep us from discovering ourselves or really knowing ourselves.

1. We often look at the sins of others instead of our own. It is often easy to see the faults of others, their failures and shortcomings, but very difficult to see our own.

The spendthrift can see the sins of the miser and the miser can see the sins of the spendthrift, but neither his own sins. What deception and weakness. Mt. 7:3-5 "And why beholdest the mote in thy brothers eye but do not consider the beam in your own eye?"

2. Another symptom of self-deception is when we measure ourselves by others who are weaker and less fortunate. Such expressions as "I wouldn't do what he has done, or I'm better than he/she is" are neither wise nor productive. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing them among themselves are not wise." 2Cor. 10:12. One can never discover self, if we spend all our time trying to cover self with a false standard. No matter how strong or weak, good or bad the other fellow may be, it does not alter my status one bit. I am what I am regardless of what others are.

The true measure which enables us to see ourselves as we really are: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another." Gal. 6:4. One of our daily problems is to prove ourselves by Christ and his word. This is the mirror that reflects my true image. Just go to the mirror and look at yourself And see what that man has to say, For it isn't your father, or mother, or wife,

Who judgment upon you must pass. The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

3. We are hindered from self-discovery by assuming virtues which are not our own.

One may take pride in his family—but what are his contributions to the family? What has he done to make the family great? In the same way one may boast because he attends a live, working church. But what does he specifically do for the church? Being in an active church will not save one who fails to do his duty. It is a matter of self-deception. A man is not honorable because he has an upright family. I must examine myself and see if I have the virtue I am proud to recognize in the group to which I belong “But let a man examine himself ...” 1Cor. 11:28 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” 2Cor. 13:5.

4. We deceive ourselves by disguising our sins with new names. In so doing, we try and make sin look good or acceptable or not as bad as it really is.

Covetous man---calls it thrift

Stingy man--- calls it humility. Don't want anyone to see them give more than a nominal sum.

Adultery---extra marital affair

Drinking---social drinking “know when to say when”

Gambling---national past time.

Stealing---borrowing etc. Giving sin another name only changes the name, not the sin.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.” Isa. 5:20

5. Discovering ourselves is hindered by the gratifying deceit of changing the form of our sins. Some think that a particular sin consists in the form in which it is visualized. Therefore we think that by changing the form we have escaped the sin. Example: “Thou shalt not kill” Ex. 20:13. So one says “I am not a killer.” Yet in his heart he hates an enemy and might wish a car would run over him. But the bible says “whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” 1John 3:15

Another might say “thank the Lord, I'm not a thief.” But he holds others up for goods or services he renders. In this case robbery takes on a different form, but is still robbery. “Rob not the poor because he is poor neither oppress the afflicted in the gate.” Someone might say “I've never committed adultery, never been unfaithful to my wife.” Yet he looks with lust in his heart upon another women. According to Christ he is an adulterer. Mt. 5:28, in his heart. People guilty of these sins, fail to see themselves as they really are.

I should diligently and conscientiously strive to discover myself, because, whether I really see myself or not, I tell on myself. I show my faith (and myself too) by my works. Jas. 2:18 I should be honest with myself and try to see myself as I really am. What I am and what I sow will determine my destiny. Gal. 6:7-8 “Be not deceived...”

The tissue of the life to be,

We weave with colors all our own

And in the fields of destiny

We reap as we have sown.

Just how do you see yourself? Is the picture accurate? It is distorted? Something we all need to consider. I want to tell you how you can get a free copy of today's sermon, but before I do, here is a song from our singers.

Song:

Close: I want to thank you for watching Let The Bible Speak Today. If you would like to have a free

copy of today's lesson all need to do is address a card or letter to Let The Bible Speak and send it to the address you will see on your screen in just a moment. Ask for the sermon titled "He Came To Himself." I will get it right out to you. If you would like to enroll in a free home bible study course, just let me know and I will see that you get the first lesson along with instructions for completing it and returning it to us for grading. It has been good to have you with us today. I hope to see you again next Sunday at this same time. Until then may God bless you.