

“Talking To Yourself Does Not Mean You Are Crazy”

Luke 15:11-24

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Stone Mountain, Georgia
February 9, 2003

Do you talk to yourself? Who doesn't? Our world is too confusing and chaotic to keep our thoughts to ourselves, even if no one is around to listen.

My grandmother was sitting on her front porch one day doing what came naturally to her. She was talking to herself. A neighbor passed by, looked around and asked, “Ms. Julie, who are you talking to?” Without skipping a beat, my grandmother replied, “The smartest person I know.”

I doubt the Prodigal was talking to himself because he was the smartest person he knew. As a matter of fact, I don't think he felt very bright sitting in that pigpen. However, no one was around to listen to his story and give him some sound advice, so he had to talk to himself.

I'm glad he did because I need to hear what he said. I need to know what he said at the lowest point in his life that made such a difference in his future. I may need to borrow these words from him sometime.

What did the Prodigal Son say to himself? **The first thing he said was that he was in a mess, and he was.** “When he came to his senses, he said ‘How many of my father's hired men have food to spare and here I am starving to death’ ” Luke 15: 17.

Have you ever been hungry because you wasted your money on something frivolous? When you were a child, did you ever spend your lunch money on baseball cards? In college, did you spend your last penny buying “refreshments” for a party? It's no fun being hungry and broke. It's even worse when, for whatever reason, you can't call your mom and dad and ask them to send you enough money to get something to eat.

This is where the Prodigal was, but to his credit he admitted it. He sized the situation up pretty accurately. He left home with a lot and now he had nothing. I'm not just referring to money, either. He lost everything of value to him, his money, pride, freedom and family. Yes, he was in a mess.

How about you? Are you in a mess today? Are you where you never thought you would be doing things you never thought you would do? The first step to recovery is honesty. Denial is deadly. So, go ahead and say it, “I am in a mess.” That simple sentence can change your life.

Secondly, the Prodigal said he had no one to blame but himself and he didn't. “I will set out and go back to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and you’ ” Luke 15: 18.

Are there any harder words to repeat than, “I have sinned?” I doubt it, but as hard as it is to say these words, it is necessary for change to occur. We will stay in a mess as long as we blame other people or circumstances for being there.

The Prodigal's situation would have never changed had he played the “blame game.” No one forced him to leave home and waste his resources. Others might have influenced him, but no one made the decision for him. He alone was responsible for that and it was crucial that he admit it.

It is just as crucial that we take responsibility for our actions, too. Blaming others for our mistakes will prevent healing.

Little Johnny threw his playmate down, kicked him and spit on him. His mother saw it and gave him a much-needed lecture. "When the devil tempts you to mistreat your friend, don't listen to him!" she said. "Ok," replied Johnny, "but mom, I need to tell you something. The devil did tempt me to throw him down and kick him, but spitting on him was all my idea!"

That's where change begins, in the heart of a humble and honest individual. If you are in a mess, I hope you are willing to admit why.

Thirdly, the Prodigal said he did not have to stay in that pigpen and he did not. "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 men.' So he got up and went to his father" Luke 15: 18-20.

I find these words of the Prodigal very interesting. They are filled with risk and hope. He knew he was in a mess and it was his fault, but he also knew that he did not want to stay there. To get out of that situation, he had to do something. He had to take action. No one was going to come and rescue him.

So, what did he do? He went to his father. Interesting, isn't it, that he did not say he would go home, but to his father. Evidently, he felt the one that he had hurt the most was the one that could help him the most. Says a lot about his father and how he viewed him.

As Paul Harvey would say, "And now you know the rest of the story." His father was waiting for him, wasn't he, and anxious to see him. He even threw a party for him to celebrate his homecoming.

How fortunate the Prodigal was. You may or may not be that fortunate. You may not have parents to return to or they may not be excited about seeing you. I'm sorry but I must tell you that you need to find someone that can help you. Seek out a person that will listen to your story and help you sort out your options. Do not merely return to a place that is familiar but to people that can help you.

One that can help you is Jesus. As a matter of fact, he's the one that told this story. He did so hoping it would motivate you to seek the help you need at the lowest time in your life. Why not bow your head now and ask for his help. I assure you he will.

This sermon was preached at the conclusion of the Celebration Choir's (Middle School Students) fifteen-minute drama and musical about the Prodigal Son.