



**Trinity Church Wall Street 11:15am Holy Eucharist – Trinity Sunday  
The Rev. Phillip A. Jackson Transcript**

**"The Entirety of the Gospel in One Parable"**

"While the Prodigal Son was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. That's the Gospel right there. Full stop," said the Rev. Phillip Jackson, preaching on Laetare Sunday at Trinity Church.

God sees us. All we have to do is start moving toward Him, and He will make a beeline to us. Hear the beautiful, powerful sermon in this video. The readings are Joshua 5: 9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21; and Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32.

**Sermon Transcript:**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Please be seated everyone.

Good morning. Good to see you all. It is said that the entirety of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in the parable you just heard. The entirety of the of the Gospel is contained within that parable that we just heard together. We know it as what? The Parable of the Prodigal Son It begins so simply, doesn't it? It begins, now I could pick up the theme that we've been looking at, of outsiders and nobodies, because notice how it actually begins. It begins with Jesus catching heck from some of the insiders because he is talking to who? Who does it say? Who does it say? Tax collectors and sinners. Notice who they're going to hear. They're attracted to him. Okay? And the authorities, the religious leaders are kind of wondering why they would go why he wants them around him, the outsiders, the ne'er do wells, the bad people. And he tells them this parable that begins so perfectly simple. There was aman who had two sons. There was a man who had two sons. And then he begins to tell us the story of these two sons. There's a younger son and there's the older son. The older son goes to the father and he says, dad, I need to get up out of here. I need to go. I need you to give me my inheritance early. Notice what the father does. You see? You see what he does? He gives it to him. Okay? He gives it to him. The younger son takes the money and he goes to Vegas. And he spends his money on I love the term dissolute living. We don't use that word anymore, do we? But it's perfect. The dissolute living and he gambles it all away. He spends it all away. He finds himself destitute, poor, poor, poor and the only work he can get is to go and feed this man's pigs. And as he's feeding the pigs, he's looking at the pig slop and he's saying says to himself, you know, even that would be good. Even that would taste better given the state I'm in.

He kind of, he kind of comes to him senses and he says, I'll go home. See my father. My father may take me back. So, he goes home. His father throws a party. While the party's going on, the older brother comes and he hears what's happening. We're going to go into this in a little more depth in just a minute. I just want to sketch it for you. The older brother hears the party and he's mad. He's mad and he won't come in the house. Father tries to get him to come into the party and he says, "No, Dad, I stayed here

all these years. I did everything you told me to do. I was a good boy and you've never even given me a goat for me and my friends to have a party and then this one comes back," and you know he couldn't say his name right? He said this one comes back and he's thrown all of his money away and you give him a party. Since I have none of that, no, no. I did all the right things. I should get that and the father says, "Okay okay, well you know everything mine is yours and you've always been here with me. But this brother of yours, he was dead and now he's alive. He was lost and now he's found." Okay in that story who are the three characters right? There's the younger son, there's the older son, and there's the father. Who do you identify with in that story? Most church people identify with the older son. It's not surprising, right? That's why you're here this morning. Cuz you do the right thing. You do the right thing. You try to do the right thing. You've always been there. Some of us and I must admit, I'm a younger son identifier. Except for Vegas. I like Vegas. I identify with that story but what I want to suggest this morning is that the person we're supposed to identify with is neither of them. But the father. Let's look at the father and let's see what he does in this story. He does five things.

The first thing he does is he divides up the money. Notice how economic the writing is, right? The son, the younger son comes and asks for his inheritance early. It said, doesn't say anything about like pops argued. Pops said, bad idea. Pops-- No, it says immediately, so he divided his property between them. Half to each. Half to each. That's the first thing he does. Then there's the second thing he does which I'm going to come back to last and you'll see why. But then when the son comes back, the son has prepared this speech. When he sees, when he sees dad, this speech he has goes like this. I will go and go back to my father and I'll say to him, father, he could see him. He's got his speech ready. Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired hands. He goes home, encounters the father, and he he makes his speech. He's got his speech. What does dad do? Does he answer the speech? Not at all. He says, quickly. Let's have a party. Let's have a party. That's the third thing he does. The fourth thing he does is with the older son. When the older son raises his objections and won't come into the party and what does it say? It says, his father came out and began to plead with him. That's all it says. Pops comes out and says, he said, come on in. Come on in to the party. The younger son will have nothing of it. Fifth thing that the father does is he says to the son, the oldest son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours but we had to have a party. We had to celebrate. We had to rejoice because this brother of yours was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and now he's found. We had to have a party.

Let's go back to the second one because if this parable is the entirety of the Gospel in a parable, then verse 15, I'm going to argue this morning, verse 15 is the entirety of the entirety and I'm going to show you why because here's what happens. It says when he came to himself, that's the younger son, literally, when he woke up, when he came to himself, he says, I'm gonna go home. And he makes his speech and he gets it ready and he goes home. Now, here's the part that is the entirety of the Gospel in a sentence. If you're on a desert island with one other person who's never heard the Gospel, this is all you need to know right here. Ready? It says, So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. That's the Gospel right there. Full stop. You don't need a theology degree. You don't need a biblical degree. You don't need a systematics degree. You don't need a liturgical--you don't need a degree. All you need to know is right there about the Christian faith. While he was still far off, his father saw him. And ran towards him. Grabbed him, hugged him, and kissed him. And kissed his boy. Cuz he saw him and loved him. That's God. That's the Father. That's the Gospel right there.

While we were still off, all we have to do is come to our senses. You see that? All we have to do is just come to our senses. And start moving towards the Father. And the Father will see you even a long way off before you see him. You know that, right? God sees us a long way before we see him. God sees us way far and while we're still walking towards him. He gets up and runs towards us. And when he comes close, he takes us in his arms and holds us and kisses us and tells us he loves us. That's true for every single one of us. That's what the Gospel is. That while we're still far away, He sees us and runs towards us. Now notice it doesn't say he walks towards us. It doesn't say he waits for the son to get close up. It says, He ran. God runs. Runs. To his sons and daughters. Do you need that? Do you need that in your life? Do you need some of that? To know that God at this very minute is not walking towards you. God is sprinting towards you. God is sprinting to you and wants nothing more than to take you in his arms and hold you and hug you and tell you how much you are loved and welcome by the way and let's have a party. Let's have a party. You need good people. You need no other anything about the Gospel of Jesus Christ than is contained in that sentence. Share that message with the world. Share that message with everyone. That all anyone needs to do is come to their senses and just start moving. Because God's already making a beeline to you. That's beautiful. That's powerful. That's the Gospel that changes people's lives. And you possess it now. You possess it. Don't get fancy. Don't get too clever. Just tell people that God's already moving to them.

Amen.