

'THINGS ARE ABOUT TO BE DIFFERENT'

LUKE 15:8-24

THINGS ONLY CHANGE WHEN WE CHANGE. WHEN WE BRING IN THE YEAR TOMMOROW NIGHT THE SEASON WILL CHANGE, BUT WILL YOU? I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT RESOLUTIONS AND WISHFUL THINKING I'M TALKING ABOUT GOING ONE WAY AND TURNING IN ANOTHER DIRECTION THAT WILL POINT YOU CLOSER TO GOD.

YOU MAY NOT HAVE TOTALLY WALKED AWAY FROM THE FATHER LIKE THE YOUNGER SON, BUT JUST MAYBE YOU HAVE NOT HONERED THE FATHER WITH HOW YOU DO LIVE. YOU MAY BE IN THE HOUSE AND JUST OBEDIENT TO THE FATHER. YOU CALL HIM LORD BUT YOU DO NOT DO THE THINGS HE SAYS.

THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT!

I HAVE ONE PRAYER THAT I MAKE FOR MY LIFE EVERY YEAR AND THAT IS TO HAVE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. MAYBE I DON'T SPEND ENOUGH TIME WITH HIM. MAYBE I DON'T HEAR HIM THE WAY HE NEEDS ME TOO. MAYBE I HAVE MADE HIM THE JEANIE IN THE BOTTLE AND ONLY CALL ON HIM WHEN I NEED A WISH AND A PRAYER.

BUT THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT!

I'M ASSUMING WE ALL WANT TO BE CLOSE TO GOD, BECAUSE WE'RE HERE TODAY. BUT THE BIBLE SAYS "ALL OF US, LIKE SHEEP, HAVE STRAYED AWAY. WE HAVE LEFT GOD'S PATHS TO FOLLOW OUR OWN." (ISAIAH 53:6, NLT) IN OTHER WORDS, LIKE SHEEP, WE TEND TO WANDER.

FROM OUR TEXT TODAY WE WILL SEE HOW WE GET CLOSER TO GOD AND REVIVE OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY. PEOPLE CAN GROW UP IN THE SAME HOUSE AND HAVE TWO TOTALLY DIFFERENT PATHS IN LIFE EVEN WHEN THEY HAVE THE SAME FATHER.

I WANT TO LOOK AT FOUR WAYS THAT WILL TRANSFORM SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

1. YOU'VE GOT TO GET FED UP - V. 17 "WHEN HE CAME TO HIS SENSES" SICK AND TIRED OF BEING SICK AND TIRED!

NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN YOUR LIFE UNTIL FIRST YOU GET DISSATISFIED WITH THINGS AS THEY ARE. IF YOU THINK YOU'RE JUST FINE, THEN YOU CAN SIT OUT THE NEXT SEVEN WEEKS BECAUSE NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN UNTIL YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED FOR CHANGE. YOU'VE GOT TO GET HUNGRY. YOU'VE GOT TO GET ANXIOUS FOR A CHANGE. NOTHING HAPPENS UNTIL YOU GET FED UP.

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY WILL BE FILLED." - MATTHEW 5:6 (NIV)

ARE YOU THERE YET? IF NOT, JUST GIVE IT TIME. GOD WILL GO TO WORK TO DEVELOP A HOLY DISSATISFACTION IN YOU. HE'LL LET A LITTLE RAIN IN YOUR LIFE. AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK HE'LL LET IN A LITTLE BIT MORE. AND IF THAT DOES NOT WORK HE'LL SEND A STORM. WHY? BECAUSE THOUGH GOD LOVES YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE, HE LOVES YOU TOO MUCH TO LET YOU STAY THAT WAY. HE WILL DO WHAT HE CAN TO KEEP YOU FROM WASTING YOUR LIFE.

"YOU CAN LEAD A HORSE TO WATER BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE HIM DRINK. BUT YOU CAN SALT HIS OATS AND MAKE HIM THIRSTY." - ANONYMOUS

GOD OFTEN MAKES YOU THIRSTY BY PUTTING SALT IN YOUR OATS. WHETHER IT'S TO BRING YOU TO HIM OR TO BRING YOU BACK TO HIM, GOD WILL WORK TO MAKE YOU AWARE THAT YOU'RE HEADED IS WRONG WAY. NOW, HE REALLY DOESN'T HAVE TO DO MUCH, BECAUSE YOU'LL BE DOING MOST OF THE WORK FOR HIM. WHEN YOU'RE GOING AWAY FROM GOD, YOU'LL BE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY, JUST LIKE THE YOUNG MAN IN THIS PARABLE. BUT JUST KNOW THAT WHEN YOU GET FED UP, WHEN YOU DECIDE YOU'RE SICK AND TIRED OF BEING SICK AND TIRED, THAT'S GOD KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR.

2. YOU'VE GOT TO OWN UP - V. 18 "I HAVE SINNED"

*I OWN UP TO MY OWN SIN. THAT'S THE SECOND THING THAT THIS YOUNG MAN DID. AND NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN UNTIL YOU OWN UP.*

*A LOT OF PEOPLE TODAY ARE FED UP; BUT THEY WANT TO BLAME SOMETHING OR SOMEONE ELSE FOR THEIR DISSATISFACTION. SO THEY LOOK EVERYWHERE BUT TO GOD TO FULFILL THEM. THEY BLAME OTHERS FOR THEIR TROUBLES. THEY BLAME GOD FOR THEIR TROUBLES. THEY LOOK EVERYWHERE ELSE BUT TO THEMSELVES FOR SOMEONE OR SOMETHING TO BLAME FOR THEIR TROUBLES. NOTICE HOW YOU SPELL BLAME: "B-LAME." IT'S BEING LAME WHEN YOU BLAME OTHER*

*PEOPLE OR THINGS FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION.*

*THE REASON YOUR LIFE IS A MESS IS BECAUSE YOU ARE LIVING LIFE YOUR WAY; AND "NEWS FLASH," WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! ONLY THE AUTHOR OF LIFE CAN GUIDE YOU IN LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL. THAT'S WHY HE'S BEEN "SALTING YOUR OATS" AS WE MENTIONED EARLIER. HE'S CALLING YOU TO GET FED UP AND TO OWN UP TO THE FACT THAT YOUR PROBLEM IS GOING YOUR OWN WAY INSTEAD OF HIS WAY. THE BIBLE CALLS THIS SIN. AND SIN IS WHAT SEPARATES US FROM GOD.*

*"IT'S YOUR SINS THAT HAVE CUT YOU OFF FROM GOD." - ISAIAH 59:2 (NLT)*

*"THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH GOD; THE WRONG IS IN YOU." - ISAIAH 59:2 (THE MESSAGE)*

*WHETHER I AM COMING TO GOD FOR THE FIRST TIME OR RETURNING TO HIM, I NEED TO OWN UP TO THE FACT THAT MY PROBLEM IS I'VE BEEN GOING MY OWN WAY RATHER THAN GOD'S WAY. I NEED TO ADMIT MY SIN AND RECOGNIZE THAT FORGIVENESS IS AVAILABLE BECAUSE GOD PAID THE PENALTY FOR MY SIN BY CHRIST'S SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS. I NEED TO ADMIT MY SIN AND TURN TO GOD.*

*3. YOU'VE GOT TO OFFER UP - V. 19 "MAKE ME"*

*IF YOU WANT TO DRAW CLOSE TO GOD AS ONE COMING TO HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME, OR AS ONE WHO IS RETURNING TO HIM, YOU NEED TO OFFER UP YOUR LIFE TO HIM. THIS IS THE THIRD THING THAT WE FIND THIS YOUNG MAN DID. HE GOT FED UP – HE CAME TO HIS SENSES. HE OWNED UP – HE SAID I’VE SINNED AGAINST GOD. THEN HE OFFERED UP.*

*NOTICE IN HOW IN VERSE 12, JESUS SAID THE SON DRIFTED AWAY SAYING, “GIVE ME . . .” BUT HERE IN VERSE 19, AS HE COMES BACK TO HIS FATHER, HE SAYS, “MAKE ME LIKE ONE OF YOUR HIRED HANDS (A SERVANT).” THAT IS TRANSFORMATION: WHEN YOUR HEART MOVES FROM SELF-CENTEREDNESS TO GOD CENTEREDNESS. NOW, THIS TRANSFORMATION DOESN’T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. BUT THERE IS A DECISION THAT STARTS THE PROCESS.*

*4. YOU’VE GOT TO LIFT UP - V. 24 “SO THEY BEGAN TO CELEBRATE.”*

*SAY “THANK YOU” TO GOD. THANK HIM FOR HIS GRACE. THANK HIM FOR HIS LOVE. THANK HIM FOR HIS GOODNESS. LIFT UP YOUR PRAISE. THROUGH LIFTING UP OUR PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD, WE STAY CLOSE TO HIM!*

*THE FATHER WAITING FOR YOU TO GET FED UP WITH YOUR LIFE AS IT IS, TO OWN UP TO YOUR SIN, AND TO OFFER UP YOUR LIFE TO HIM. AND WHEN YOU DO, HE IS READY TO RECEIVE YOU! BUT NOTICE WHAT HE INVITES YOU TO WHEN YOU COME TO HIM - A PARTY, A CELEBRATION!*

*WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR BECAUSE THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT!*