

A Servant of Sin

“¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.” – Luke 15:14-15.

1. A Life of Servitude

Sin is sweet; but its pleasures are often short-lived. In contrast, its consequences are far-reaching and long-lasting, and often serve as daily reminders of our past mistakes and poor judgments. Here the young man spent all his wealth on having the time of his life. But just as day follows night, his money soon ran out and he was in need.

When we sin we co-operate with the devil in furthering his cause to destroy our soul, and to bring us in a state of bondage. Here the young man had reached a ruinous state as a result of his wild living, and now he had become a servant of sin.

When I say ‘a servant of sin,’ I am not referring to someone who repeatedly commits sinful acts. ‘A servant of sin,’ in this context, is a person who, as a consequence of sin, had become so in need that he now lives a life of servitude in order to eke out his daily sustenance. This is what the young man had become - a servant as a result of living a sinful life.

2. A Father of Lies

The attractions of this world and the ‘bright lights’ are all ‘lies’ and ‘deceptions’ that the devil uses to entrap us. The wild parties, drinking binges, sex and drugs are temporary ‘highs’ the devil uses to kill our dreams, and ultimately destroy our souls. What are not popularly reported are the reckless and extravagant spending, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, date rapes, abortions and illicit drug use that are frequent occurrences of the ‘night life’ associated with having a good time.

This writer reminds us of the devil’s nature:

“The first mention of Satan in the Bible as the serpent also mentions one of his key characteristics, “more subtle than any beast of the field.” (Genesis 3:1) Satan doesn’t come to us saying he will get us to follow him, but rather, “Why don’t you do what you want to do?” He really means “instead of what God wants you to do.” In this way if we walk in our own ways (doing our own thing), we are following him because we will be following down the path that he went.”¹

So the young man left his father’s house to do what he wanted - under the illusion that he would live a more exciting, fun-filled and happier life in a far country. Such ‘lies’ and ‘half truths’ are the strategies that the devil – the father of lies – uses to strip us of divine purpose and our earthly wealth. He ultimately wants us to move from being a servant of God, to becoming a servant of sin – where we no

longer worship the true and living God, but now worship the devil – the father of lies - by our pleasure-seeking, covetous and corrupt lifestyles.

3. A Citizen of the Kingdom of Darkness

When we become a servant of sin, we are no longer a citizen of the kingdom of God. Instead we join ourselves to the kingdom of darkness (sin), and live as citizens of this new ‘country.’ Luke 15:15 (KJV) says this of the young man:

“And he went and join himself to a citizen of that country..”

As a child of his father, he turned his back on a life where his daily needs were provided by his daddy, to one where he had become a hired servant who had to work hard for his supper. This is the consequence of our sinful actions which are fuelled by a desire for worldly pleasure, as opposed to having a passion for the things of God. As we seek out ‘greener pastures,’ we soon discover that these parties, the new friends and adventures do us more harm than good, and ultimately draw us away from God.

4. A Debasing Life

A life of sin is a debasing and degrading life. Here the young man’s life had slumped to an all-time low: a feeder of swine. Interestingly, the bible uses ‘animals’ as metaphors for humans. Compare these two:

“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.” Matthew 7:6

In John 21:17 Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.”

These three animals ‘dogs,’ ‘swine’ and ‘sheep’ speak of three types of human beings:

Dogs – vicious and ungrateful persons who are quick to reproach you;

Swine – ignorant people who are not interested in hearing the Word of God or anything of value;

Sheep - ‘Lost’ but impressionable persons open to hearing the Word of God; also symbolic of the body of Christ.

The young man was not feeding ‘sheep,’ but he was feeding ‘swine.’ His menial task was an unpleasant one – which was not only in stark contrast to his divine purpose, but was also one without any job satisfaction. This young man had great potential and came from a position of wealth and great stature. However, he now lived a debased and meaningless life which was full of misery and heartache.

5. A Slave Is Without Family

John 8:34-36 reads:

'Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'

First Jesus states that a sinner is a slave to sin. Second He reminds us that as a slave to sin, the servant of sin has no permanent place in the family. Jesus is interested in having a relationship, and he likens that to being a son in a family who has a lasting relationship with his father. The devil, on the other hand, through our sinful acts, seeks to destroy any relationship between the father and son, and in a similar light, is not keen about us having a relationship with God or His Son Jesus Christ. That is the real reason he wants to bring us in a place of bondage – so that our lives can never be a life of worship unto God. Instead his objective is to steal our worship from God and to get us to worship the things of this world, as we become servants of sin.

Matthew Henry Commentary on Luke 15:14-15 states:

"A sinful state is a vile, servile state. When this young man's riot had brought him to want, his want brought him to servitude. The same wicked life which was represented by riotous living, is here represented by servile living; for sinners and slaves. The devil is the citizen of that country; sinners join themselves to him, hire themselves into his service, to do his work, and depend on him for maintenance. They that commit sin are servants of sin, John 8:34. He sent him into the fields, not to feed sheep, but to feed swine. The business of the devil's servant is to make provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof, and that is no better than feeding swine."

But Isaiah reminds us that even if we go astray there is always hope in Jesus:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." - Isaiah 53:6

Although sin may have brought us to the lowest points in our lives, nothing can separate us from the love of God. For Romans 8: 38-39 declares

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

May God help us!

Heavenly Father,

“Thank You for the hope in Christ Jesus. I have gone astray as a result of heeding the lies of the wicked one, and have found myself in a dark and sinful place. I am no longer a child of Your kingdom, but now a citizen of the kingdom of darkness. Forgive me of my sins, O God! Today by repenting of my sins, and by accepting Your Son Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, I renounce my citizenship of the devil’s kingdom. I declare that my life is now transformed from being one of vile servitude to sin, to that of being a servant of Jesus Christ. I thank You, O Lord, for Your love towards me. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. I thank You for Your indwelling Holy Spirit who will lead me in all truth. I declare that all praise, honour and glory belong to You and Your Son, Jesus. In Jesus’ mighty name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen.”

Memory Verse: *“..whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”- John 8:34.*

Notes:

1. The Kingdom of Darkness. <http://ubdavid.org/advanced/all-about-me/all-about-me2.html>

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