

Sacrificial Giving: "All That I Have Is Yours."

³¹ "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and *all that I have is yours.* ³² It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"
"Luke 15:31-32.

Throughout the parable, the heart of the father was always one of sacrificial giving. First, he did not hesitate to give his younger son his share of wealth when he demanded it. Second, upon his younger son's return, he joyfully restored him to 'sonship' by clothing him with the finest robe, ring and sandals. Third, to celebrate his safe return, the father gave the fattened calf as a token of sacrifice unto God, and to mark the joyous occasion. Now, the father revealed his true heart- one of sacrificial giving- to his older son when he said: "All that I have is yours!" He reasoned that since his older son was always with him, there was no need to give him anything because he already possessed everything.

As it is with this father in the parable, so it is also with our Heavenly Father. God, allow me to find the right words to give all glory and honour unto You, and Your Son Jesus.

1. **"Son You Are Always With Me."** There is a need to maintain an unbroken relationship with the Father. In order to receive from our Heavenly Father, it is important that we stay connected with Him, and fight against all odds – trials and temptations – to maintain that relationship.

We saw the disaster that befell the younger son who broke that relationship with his father and chose a life of riotous living. A sinful lifestyle always perpetuates more sin, and opens the door for the devil to run roughshod over one's life. The older son, on the other hand, fought the good fight and maintained a healthy relationship with his father.

The essence of being a successful disciple of Christ is emphasized in the account of Jesus being Our True Vine in John 15:6-8:

"⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples..."

2. **'Watch and Pray.'** While we obediently serve God, the devil will be working doubly-hard to destroy us. The devil's objective is to 'sift us' and to render us useless and powerless. It is a raging battle daily between 'good' and 'evil.' That is why Jesus admonished Peter to pray always in Matthew 26:41:

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We must also put on the full armour of God if we are going to be victorious in this furious battle. Prayer and praise must be our constant companions as we go about our Father's daily business.

3. **'All That I Have Is Yours.'** The older son remained speechless after his father made this revelation to him. It was a 'jaw-dropping' moment. The older son was not only blown away by what was said, but he also recognize how narrow-sighted and selfish he had been. While he was more preoccupied with being satisfied with a young goat as a reward for his dedicated service to his father, and eager to celebrate with his friends, the father was more interested in leaving a greater inheritance for his older son in the distant future. What are we willing to settle for now as 'the best' from God? I dare say to you that God has much more in store for you in the distant future, far beyond your wildest imaginations. *Ephesians 3:20-21 reminds us of this:*

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

4. **Don't Sweat Over the Small Stuff!** I believe that the father was also making this point to the older son. The older son was more interested in 'the hand' of the father' that he was in 'the face' of the father. Let me put it another way. Some people seek out others only for what they can get from them. Have you ever met anyone like that?

The older son was interested in receiving a young goat as a reward for his long, hard, faithful and dedicated service to his father. His eyes were focused on the finite possession of his father, which he felt was being depleted. It was as though he was saying, "Oh boy, there goes the fattened calf!" He was only looking at the limited resources of his father and he wanted to get his share before it ran out! But his father said, "Take your eyes off the calves, and what you need to satisfy you for a day of fun with your friends. Instead, focus on the abundance of all that I have, which can satisfy you for a lifetime!!! It is all yours!!!" My point is simply this. When we next go to the Heavenly Father in prayer, let us not be solely occupied with telling God all that we need to take us through the day, week or month. Matthew 6:8 said that God already knows our needs even before we ask:

"For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Instead, take time, like the father was saying to the son, to give thanks. Celebrate what God has done for others. Give praises unto God for all the lost souls that have been found, and have returned to the house of the Father. Thank God for His endless love that He has for us, by the

sacrificial giving of His Son, Jesus. Give Him thanks for saving a wretch like me! Stop looking at his hands and start seeking His face....Behold his beauty and His goodness, and His everlasting mercy.

5. **Maintaining Any Relationship Involves Work.** Once again the distinction is seen between the attitude of the older son, and that of his younger brother. While the younger son was preoccupied with a lifestyle of sinful fun and games, the older son had a mind to work. The younger son reaped a whirlwind of problems and came to near starvation, while the older son was rewarded for his years of obedient and faithful service with all that the father had.

"For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind"- Hosea 8:7;

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."- Luke 11:28.

Likewise, maintaining a relationship with the Heavenly father calls for a lot of work, discipline, sacrifice, and mutual love. I believe that the older son was able to accomplish this – which is possible by the way- because he had genuine love for the father. Once there is genuine love for God, nothing is ever too difficult to do for Him.

6. **The Older Son Did Not 'Miss Out' on Anything.** I would like to say that sometimes when we see people having worldly fun, we may think that as a disciple of Christ, we are 'missing out' on all the excitement in life. I love this parable because it is so practical and instructive. The younger son went away with his wealth and wasted it on the pleasures of the world, while his older brother remained faithful to God in his daily duties. Who got the greater reward? Yes the father restored the younger son with a few possessions and even killed the best calf for him in celebration of his return. But it was the older faithful and dedicated son who got all that the father had. While the younger son spent his wealth on parties and prostitutes, the older son spent his time on prayer and praise. In the end, the older son reaped a bountiful harvest and got all that his father had. It is true. What we sow we reap. Sow sin reap destruction and suffering. Sow righteousness and reap the blessings of God.

Never think that what you are doing for God will either go unnoticed or is a waste of time, energy and resources. Faithfully and obediently persevere, and in due course you will reap your heavenly blessings, if you don't give up. Galatians 6:8-10 explains:

⁸The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to the family of faith...."

7. **A Distinction Between Son and Servant.** The father had two sons and many servants. By all account, the father took god care of his household. However, unlike the servants, the sons stood to receive an inheritance from the father. This was reflected in his statement, "All that I have is yours." We, too, are no longer servants of sin, but heirs to the King. As such, we can boldly proclaim that all that the Father has, as defined in the many promises of God, belongs to us.

"So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, you are also an heir through God."- Galatians 4:7

"All that God has is ours." He always rewards the faithful and obedient with his richest blessings, far beyond what the human mind can ever imagine. My friend, take some time daily to seek Him through His Word, and to determine the many promises that God has made concerning your life. Declare those promises over your life, your family, friends, your workplace, your school, strangers, the poor and needy, your community, your nation, and the world. And reap the many blessings that God has for you. All that God has is yours!

To God be the glory! All honour belongs to Him and His Son, Jesus. Be blessed!

Heavenly Father,

"Forgive me for only seeking Your Hands and not Your Face. I thank You for showing me that all that You have is mine. For I am a son and no longer a slave to sin. I recognize that there are countless blessings that You promise for my life, my family, the poor and needy and this nation. Give me the grace to seek Your Face as I spend quality time daily in Your presence. I praise Your Holy name for Your love and goodness. I thank You for Your saving a wretch like me, and for using me to draw many others into Your kingdom. Give me the spirit of discernment as I watch and pray. For, You have already given me the victory. I lift up my voice in adoration of Your majestic power, and thank You for Your divine protection, untold mercy and favour towards me. In Jesus' mighty name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen."

Memory Verse:

"Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. – Luke 15:31.

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