

New Year, New You.

TRANSFORMATION

NEW YEAR; NEW YOU - Lk.15: 11-32
Adegboyega Adejobi

Luke 15: 11-32:

"And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy

brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

These two sons show the two types of people in the world - good and bad, saints and sinners. Which one are you?

This story shows the goodness of God as the Creator and Father of all - good and bad people; Jews and Gentiles.

It doesn't matter however bad we might have behaved or messed up, God's focus and emphasis is always on repentance and return. If only we will repent of our sin, God is willing to forgive - **1Jn.1: 9.**

1 John 1: 9:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The story shows the benefit or advantage of age. It was the younger son who made the wrong request - whereas, young people tend to be reckless, the older, the wiser and more mature we tend to behave - ***"Old woods best to burn, old wine best to drink, old friends best to trust and old authors best to read"*** - **Francis Bacon.**

The senior brother was sober and reserved but the junior one was volatile, bold, brash and reckless - he asked for his portion of goods from their father in his lifetime.

Although strange yet, the father granted his request. Sometimes we wonder how God does His things e.g. A poor teenage girl or even a mad woman becomes pregnant but a rich woman happily married is barren; a rich man with all the care is sickly and dies young but a mad man living in filth is strong and lives long; some lazy people are born into riches but some hardworking people live and die poor. Life is a mystery that only God understands! - **Eccles.9: 11.**

Ecclesiastes 9: 11:

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

The young man wanted early liberty but forgot that early liberty comes at a high price. A lot of us want this type of liberty also; we want liberty to do whatever we like but let us remember that this type of liberty comes at a high price.

This story teaches us that all blessings come from God including money and material wealth. Money in itself is not a problem but the love of money and the ambition to be rich cast snares on the path of man - **1Tim.6: 9-10; Ps.62: 10b.**

1 Timothy 6: 9-10:

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Psalm 62: 10b:

"...if riches increase, set not your heart upon them."

Immediately the prodigal son received his portion of goods, he left home and went to a far country. Success and wealth always make us feel independent, self-sufficient and make us go away from those who can help us.

Maybe his lot would have been better if he had stayed close by. At least, his father or senior brother would be checking on him but he went far away from home. How far away are you from those who could help you? - **Prov.27: 5; 3: 11-12; 2Tim.4: 1-4.**

Proverbs 17: 5:

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."

Proverbs 3: 11-12:

"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

2Timothy 4: 1-4:

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Something must chastise or train you - if your father and mother, or brethren or teachers do not chastise or train you then, life will chastise and train you! How teachable are you?

In a short while, the young man wasted all his goods on riotous living and became a poor hireling feeding swine; he simply lacked the skill to manage his success and wealth.

Many successful people in the world today are like this prodigal son - though successful, they lack the skill to manage their success.

Whereas, success can make us proud, failure usually humbles us. In that sense, suffering can be a blessing in that it teaches us the right values and imparts to us the right virtues. Even, Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered - **Heb.5: 8**.

Hebrews 5: 8:

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Meanwhile, the father of the prodigal son did not look for him but I believe he was praying for him. He kept trusting God that sooner or later, his younger son would learn his lessons and return home. And good enough, God heard his prayer!

There are times also that we do not have to struggle but just relax and be praying and leave things in the hands of God who will make all things beautiful in due course of time (**Eccles.3: 11**).

Let us thank God that the prodigal was humble and remorseful enough to return home before it was too late. Many people around realize their mistakes but pride keeps them away from making amends.

The father of the prodigal son had been waiting for the moment of his return and even threw a big party for him when he eventually showed up. For this young man, it was too good to be true! For him, everything became new again!

We must be grateful to God - our ever-living Father for His large heart to receive every prodigal son or daughter back whenever we repent and return to Him - **2Pet.3: 9**.

2 Peter 3: 9:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The senior brother of the prodigal son had to learn some lessons too. Though, good and well-behaved, he was not loving or caring enough to be happy at the return of his brother.

But even the angels in heaven rejoice each time a sinner repents - **Lk.15: 7**.

Luke 15: 7:

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Let us all have genuine concern for intercession, evangelism, soul-winning and church growth this year!

Perhaps, the senior brother was concerned that his brother's return would encroach on his inheritance or shorten his ration but let us know that God is rich enough to bless ALL of us. Your brother or sister's blessing can never reduce your portion of inheritance in Christ.

Conclusion:

So, for ALL of us, it must be - New Year, New You!

We must be renewed in repentance, renewed in prayer (intercession in particular), we must be renewed in evangelism and soul-winning, renewed in our love for God, His work and our brethren, renewed as we seek less of money, material wealth and generally, the things of this world. We must be renewed all round and on all sides.

Note:

All Scriptures from the King James Version of The Bible