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## True Son not a Slave

## Personal Response

There is so much to learn through the whole of Luke 15. Jesus tells three parables one straight after the other, each one reveals God's heart for the lost and His commitment to restore and redeem. As with other passages of scripture titles are often added postscript, the final parable of the Luke 15 triplet is commonly referred to as 'The Prodigal Son' The Passion Translation entitles it 'The Loving Father'. In the parable Jesus tells the story of two sons and a Father. The younger son asks for his inheritance early and squanders it on riotous living whilst the other son works hard for his Father. Ending up in squalor the younger son realises the error of his ways and returns to his father in humility and seeking to be employed as a servant. However the father spots him from a long way off, runs to the son and reaffirms him as a true son. Meanwhile the hardworking son is resentful and refuses to come back into the family home to celebrate the return of his brother. In response the father pleads for the son to join them but the elder son says *'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'* In these two telling sentences he identifies himself as a slave and his brother as a son. If we were to make a film adaption from various perspectives it could equally be entitled:

The repentant Son

Wealth to Rags to Riches

The pigs and the scoffers

The (elder) Son who enslaved himself

Unfathomable Mercy, Amazing Grace

The Shawl, The Signet & The Sandal

We will explore what it is to be a **True Son not a slave**

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Living by the Spirit is key to living in our true identity as Sons *and daughters* of God. Jesus explains in three key elements how God establishes us as true sons.

1. Robe of Righteousness
2. Ring of Authority
3. Sandals of identity & power

Luke 15:22-24 The Passion Translation

<sup>22</sup> “Turning to his servants, the father said, ‘Quick, bring me the best robe, my very own robe, and I will place it on his shoulders. Bring the ring, the seal of sonship, and I will put it on his finger. And bring out the best shoes you can find for my son’ <sup>23</sup> Let’s prepare a great feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For my beloved son was once dead, but now he’s alive! Once he was lost, but now he is found!’ And everyone celebrated with overflowing joy.

4.



## Robe of Righteousness

The son returned in humility and repentance but the Father did not wait for him, he ran to the Son In Biblical times this would’ve been incredibly undignified, Jesus is again driving home the Father’s commitment to the lost. This commitment was fully realised with the apparent indignity of the cross. He, that is the Father on reaching the Son embraced him and covered him with kisses. The covenant commitment that we looked at with Abraham is demonstrated in parable form, the Father, that is God, establishes it. As with ourselves, the son was unable to fulfil his righteous obligations. However the Father did not wait for the Son but ran to cover him. The robe signifies mercy and salvation which adopted

sons receive, and significantly it also signifies Grace and extravagant love. Sin is dealt with and shame is covered, then righteousness is established. The Son would have been happy to be received back as a servant but the father was committed to reinstating him as a true son. As at our salvation the father pays the debt, and then credits our account with righteousness. In humility, repentance and faith come to the Father and as “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”(Romans 4:3 NIV) so too righteousness is credited to you.

Isaiah 61:10 NASB

I will rejoice greatly in the Lord,  
My soul will be joyful in my God;  
For He has clothed me with garments of salvation,  
He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness,



## Ring of Authority

In placing a Family ring on the son's finger the Father was giving him authority. We see this level of imputed authority throughout scripture, symbolised in the ring that was given to Joseph by pharaoh and at the conclusion of the book of Haggai declared over Zerubbabel by the Lord. Powers and principalities are subject to this authority. The ring would be used with wax to create a seal on documents carrying the full authority of the Father - King. You too carry authority and your seal is the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 NASB

In Him,  
you also, after listening to the message of truth,  
the gospel of your salvation  
having also believed,  
you were sealed in Him  
with the Holy Spirit of promise



## Sandals of identity & power

Shoes-Sandals were significant symbols of rights and typically slaves were not permitted to have footwear. Furthermore shoes were used in rituals of exchange to demonstrate a change of rights as was seen when Boaz the kinsman redeemer (Ruth 4:8 KJV) Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

So we may begin to grasp what it is to be a son not a slave but it is also essential to understand what it is to first be a Son with a covenantal identity, who serves rather than one who looks to gain identity as a son through service. Hired servants may work hard and receive a fair wage, but they will never be able to earn their way to being a son. True Sons work hard and with dedication, but not for a wage, theirs is a full inheritance. When my children were young and invited their friends home they would say do you want to come to 'my house', they didn't say do you want to come to the house of my father. Likewise when jobs needed to be done around the home and they served with the rest of the family they didn't receive a payment for the task, They experienced all the benefits of the home and in time theirs will be an inheritance. Proverbs 13:22 A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, (there were other opportunities to discover the value of hard work for fair pay, we will explore this theme another time) We can view our relationship with Father God and our brothers and sisters as a transaction in which we expect and demand equity in a moment of time. Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. Jesus told other parables; in one He explained that an employer set workers to a task in the

morning and others joined throughout the day, yet the employer paid them all the same amount. Those who worked more hours were disgruntled and felt short changed but Jesus pointed out that they received what they were promised and it was not for them to compare. One who is 'only' a servant only considers the wage, whereas true sons understand the inheritance. Sons of God are joint heirs with Christ, receiving the Holy Spirit as a down payment and eternal life. When promoted to glory we will be continually aware of the presence of God worshipping with all the heavenly hosts!. How churlish would it be to say that I expect more than this just because in a moment I seemed to expend more effort than another. In another parable Jesus pointed out that when a wolf comes to attack the sheep the hired hands will run as their wage is insufficient to compensate for the risk. True sons however stand in faith and authority, honourably defending what is the Fathers, and as joint heirs what is their own.

Again we see:

COVENANT - *relationship* Sons not hired helps

KINGDOM - *authority* Standing ground

## Stepping into identity - Character of a Son

The angel of the Lord came to Peter whilst in prison and said (Acts 12:8) "Gird yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he \*said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." I believe the angel was doing more than instructing Peter to put on his physical clothes but telling him to live in his spiritual identity clothed in righteousness and power. We will explore in future sessions what it is to be disciplined by Christ, but let us begin to consider the character of a true son. One who lives righteously because he was first made righteous. Here I have started a list of character attributes of a son THE son Jesus Christ. Why not continue the list Consider what it is to be a child of God and ask Abba Father to reveal where you may still be living as a slave and how you can step into your full identity as a joint heir with Christ.

Humble	But not	Feeble
Assured	But not	Domineering
Confident	But not	Cocky
Powerful	But not	Grasping
Influencing	But not	Controlling
Compassionate	But not	Compromising
Peace-maker	But not	Copitulator
Honouring	But not	Sycophantic
Joyful	But not	Self-Indulgent
Purposeful	But not	Frantic

## **Declaration of a Child of God**

In humility I come to the Father

I repent of my sin

He places upon me the Robe of Righteousness,

A robe of salvation

He removed my sin and cancelled my debt

His robe is mine, my faith He credits with His righteousness.

He places His signet ring on my finger,

with His Spirit I am sealed

As a joint heir with Christ I rule to bring Him glory

In His sandals I am in right standing,

Shod with the gospel of peace and power

I am in His Kingdom and His Kingdom is in me

where I stand His Kingdom comes

Abba Father, Lord of Lords

I am yours