



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Experiencing the Father's Love

SPEAKER

SP Chua Seng Lee

THEME Experiencing the Father

DATE

8 & 9 Mar 2025

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the previous series of sermons, we learnt that knowledge of the truth—that we have direct access to our Father in heaven because we know His Son—leads to godliness (Titus 1:1). However, Christianity goes beyond mere theory; it is imperative that we *experience* this truth as well and build a relationship with God, our Father. This topic is explored in this new series of sermons on *Experiencing the Father*.

EXPERIENCING FATHER GOD

When we think about the role our earthly fathers play in our lives, we may think of an angry figure who catches our mistakes and punishes us for them, without grace or mercy. Some fathers may even be absent for much of their children's lives.

Even though our understanding of fatherhood may be coloured by our experiences with our imperfect earthly fathers, we can take heart that Father God is perfect. God seeks the lost so that the lost may be found—much like in the parables of the lost coin, lost sheep and the prodigal son described in Luke 15.

1) Sin moves us away from our Father God

In the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32, the titular character journeyed to a distant country and squandered away his share of his father's estate. Similarly, sin breaks God's heart and distances us from Him.

The prodigal son felt the impact of his sin as the land he was in suffered a famine. In desperation, he took on the shameful job of feeding pigs, an animal that Jews deem unclean.

The devil had come to steal, kill and destroy in his life. When we walk away from God, sin makes us careless and unwise, robs us of our self worth and brings us death.

2) Grace brings us back to God

Fortunately, the prodigal son eventually came to his senses. This was an act of grace from God—the man had an awakening, remembered how good his father was, and recognised how foolish he had been.

When he returned home, his father spotted him and ran towards him even when he was still some distance away. His father had been looking out for him, longing for his return. It did not matter that his son had hurt him, or that he may not be fit enough to run—he wanted to receive his son personally.

Similarly, when we take a step towards God, He takes a thousand steps towards us.

The father then fed his son and provided him with robes, a ring and a pair of sandals. They each signify how things we lose to sin can be restored through a relationship with Father God:

1. the Robe signifies dignity—our personhood is restored after sin had led to shame
2. the Ring signifies royalty—our position is restored after sin had led to unworthiness
3. the Sandals signify destiny—our purpose is restored after sin had led to purposelessness

SP Chua Seng Lee pointed out that the father in the parable did not respond when his son confessed his sins. Instead, he focused on taking care of him as it was an occasion worth celebrating, just in the previous parables in the chapter when the lost coin or lost sheep were found. When we return to Father God, His love abounds—that is how precious we are to him.

3) God's presence is a blessing. Don't miss it by comparing!

The prodigal son's older brother was jealous that his return was being celebrated. Much like this older brother, many of us may be judgmental and wonder why someone could be "let off so easily" or enjoy "undeserved" blessings.

God is not like us. While humans celebrate others because of their achievements or skills, God is proud of us because we are His. His love is unconditional. And just as the father in the parable reassures his older son that he is always with him and that everything he has belongs to him, having a relationship with Father God is a blessing in itself.

CONCLUSION

It is through the kindness of God that we can repent and overcome the sin in our lives. It is through experiencing His love that we learn to love others.

God's love for us is so unconditional that He sacrificed his Son just so that we can have a relationship with Him. Therefore, we can go before Him as we are, regardless of what we have done, or whether we "have our lives together". God is not waiting to judge us; He is waiting to embrace us and welcome us home.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you relate to the prodigal son? What happened, and what spurred you to return to Father God?

2. In the parable, the father gave his son robes, a ring and a pair of sandals. These three objects represent dignity, royalty and destiny respectively. Can you remember a time where one or more of these things were given to you by Father God? Share your experiences with your cell group members.

3. What can you do in your everyday life to experience Father God more keenly?