

Episode 15 (Exposé 23): The Elder Son

Anchor Lady: Hello everyone. We are live now and we are sorry for being some minutes late. If you are just joining us now, we are on to Exposé 247 where we turn the light on Christ. We've been...if you've been following us, we've been doing the Exposé on the Prodigal Father Series for the past few weeks. So I'm here to announce to you that the clock kept ticking from now on. We've had to look at some characters... How many characters have we looked at in this story?

Peter: Yeah, we've looked at the younger brother, we've looked at the...ermmm...the Father Himself, and...those are the two main characters we've looked at so far—

Anchor Lady: the Pharisees?

Peter: Well, yeah, the Pharisees, the scribes, the publicans and sinners—they were the people that were there when Jesus began to speak the parable.

Anchor Lady: So here comes the main character now, the elder brother...

Peter: hmmm...

Anchor Lady: So he's coming in now. So we're like in the last lap of the journey. So if you've been following us. You are just I for a very interesting...very interesting time. But as we are about to start this episode about the elder brother, I have a mixed reaction about this. A part of me is happy that we are coming to it, and a part of me is not really happy because it's like we are going to lose some people, lose some friends. I think so because it's like it's going to generate...something like that. Because I remember before, years back, when I look at this story, that part of the story used to make me angry so I can really really understand, I can totally relate with anybody on this—any of our audience who will feel uncomfortable with this part of this story but the truth must be...must be told. And so we are in the elder brother's part of the story. So why not sit back, grab a bottle of water, coffee or whatever you do and let's get started.

Peter: Yeah. Okay. Welcome viewers. On the last episode, we actually stopped in verse 24 if you're with us. The verse 24 was where the Father announced that the son was dead but now is alive; he was lost and now is found and they began to celebrate—that's verse 24. And we've actually had a bit of...you know, we actually looked at the implication of being dead and coming back to life, and we looked at that as it concerns those of us who were once dead in our sins and trespasses and now we are recreated in our human spirit as a new creation. Now, we are looking at verse 25. Luke 15 verse 25. Now, the plot of the story is changing gradually. The emphasis so far had been on the younger brother.

Anchor Lady: Yes...

Peter: And the Father. Those were the two main characters so far. A third character is going to enter into this story and this third character is quite an interesting one and we are going to look at that. Verse 25—Luke 15 verse 25.

Anchor Lady: *Now, his elder son was in the field...*

Peter: The elder son—now you see, that's the third character—the elder son. Now, Jesus in this parable introduces us into this third character. He's called 'the elder son'—that's his name, 'the elder son'...

Anchor Lady: *'...the elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing...*

Peter: hmmm... okay. Music and dancing—there's excitement in the air. Okay, now what happens next?

Anchor Lady: *...and he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant...*

Peter: hmmm...okay

Anchor Lady: verse 27. *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.*

Peter: Yeah. We've looked at all that.

Anchor Lady: verse 28. *And he was angry...*

Peter: He was angry. Yeah...Now, Jesus introduced not just the name of this third character but some of his attributes, his behaviours, his...as you may say, some of his traits, some of the things that describe his personality. And I want you all to take note of the things that describe this elder brother. Now, the first thing that we noticed about him was that he became angry. Now, Why was he angry? Go on please.

Anchor Lady: *...and would not go in...*

Peter: He would not go into this celebration, this feast. Okay...

Anchor Lady: *Therefore came his Father out, and intreated him.*

Peter: Okay. Now, the first thing is the Bible says he was angry and he refused to join the feast. Now, we need to know—I mean this elder brother heard the sound of music and dancing and—

Anchor Lady: rejoicing

Peter: —and rejoicing, and the first thing is, he became angry. Errrm, quite angry; he was not happy. And you see, at this point, it doesn't make a lot of sense, because you are wondering, why would someone be angry when a rejoicing going on? Why would someone be angry when there is so much dancing and, excitement and everybody is celebrating and somebody is

angry. Now, we need to really look at this elder brother—he must have a reason—there must be a reason, there must be a basis for this kind of emotional response that he actually has. You can go on.

Anchor Lady: verse 29. *...he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.*

Comment [J01]: Actually, this is still verse 28, not 29.

Peter: Now, did you notice that the Father has a very unusual way of approaching his sons? Have you noticed that when the younger son was actually out there wasting his Father's resources and he was contemplating going back home, it was the Father who was waiting for him, trying to drag him back home. Have you noticed that even for the elder son who seemingly had been at home but actually who was at the field at the time of the celebration and he refused to come in when he got near to the house because he was angry, the Father still went out to intreat him. Now I want you to notice the nature of this Father. We can never over-explain how the Father is always the One seeking out. It doesn't matter whether it's the younger son, whether it's the elder son; He's always out there trying to drag everybody back home. He doesn't wait on people to have initiative to come back home. He's out there ready to take them back home. It tells us of a Father who is actually on the active side of things. That's why a times when people say they 'found God', I mean it's a very strange thing—I've found God.' The Bible says one thing about God's love, the Bible says why we can love God is because He loved us first. We have no initiative to love God. We were actually stark sinners; we were enemies of God in our minds. We were God's number-one enemy, so there was no way we could have initiative of saying we're gonna come back to the Father. The Bible says *the reason why we can love...* in fact, for anything we do in the Kingdom, it's because of the Father—it's supposed to be a response to what He did to us. That's why the more we understand the kind of love the Father has, the more we can love Him better and deeper. So, that's why every kind of instruction that tells us to do more and more for God but doesn't unveil to you what God did for you is going to put you under a bondage. So a true way to relate to God is to have a deep understanding of what He did for us. So we see a Father, even not just to the younger son, but even to the elder son, he was also after him to take him back in. And I want us to actually appreciate that. He's the Father Who is all-out looking for us. Now, you could go on, please.

Anchor Lady: *And he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee...*

Peter: Now...Now...Now this is why he was angry, because before the anger didn't make any sense. We were just wondering why would he be angry because they are celebrating his younger brother? Now, he's giving us a good explanation for why he, he actually has the 'right' to be offended about what is happening in the house. Now, let's listen to his commentary—what he has to say about himself. You know, a times we're struggling to understand this elder son—what kind of nature does he have? How does he think? What is his paradigm—his mentality, his ideology, his mentality? It's hard to understand. But the good thing is the elder son by his own mouth gave us a clear description of his personality and how he thought about his Father. Now, I think we've talked on this episode and so far on the previous episodes that

the quality of our Christian life is dependent on how we see the Father. We cannot live beyond how we see God. So the picture of God is the greatest asset a Christian can have and that is why Satan's number one attack on humanity is to distort how we see the Father. So the picture of God is the greatest asset a Christian can have. That's why Satan's number one attack on the soul of humanity is to distort how we see the Father. We see he did that to Adam and Eve—he did exactly that. He manipulated the picture of God that they had. He told them, he said, God knows the day you eat of the fruit, you'll be like Him knowing the difference between good and evil... And so, he painted a picture of God to them Who knew better for what they needed but He was going to short-change them. Now, Satan is still in that activity all around the world—trying to give people, either telling them there is no God, or for those that believe in God, give them a picture of Who He is. So we can see—the elder son is going to tell us, not just about himself but how he views his father. Now let's watch this. Now, what does it say please?

Anchor Lady: *Lo, these many years do I serve thee...*

Peter: Now, he said, I've served You these many years. Now, good; he's telling us about his relationship with the father. He said *'I have served you for these many years...'* What does it say next?

Anchor Lady: *neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment...*

Peter: Or...this your elder son said, number one, watch this: I have served this Father these many years. Number two, he said he has never transgressed—he's never broken any single law—any single regulation that was made at home for him to follow from the Father; he said he never broke one. Now, this is a great pedigree; this is a very great CV that, you see, when we talk about the Curriculum Vitae of someone, this guy has a very good CV. He said, *I have never broken or transgress any regulation that was given to me by my Father.* Now, how do we know he is so bold? Or how do we know this is true? Now, you have to know that he's not just telling someone about this; he's telling this to the Father—right to His face. So we can trust this testimony of this elder son about himself because he's talking to the Father, he's telling the Father *You can attest to this; I have served you all these while—*

Anchor Lady: And the Father didn't disproof that.

Peter: The Father didn't disproof that. Now, contrast what he's saying t the younger son who actually ran away with the inheritance of the Father and secondly said, it's one thing to serve you, it's a whole different thing that I didn't even break any of your regulations; I didn't transgress anyone of them. Now, the word *transgress* means to go beyond the boundary. He said I didn't go beyond the boundary of every stipulation you've given to me. Now, please, I want you to begin to create a picture in your mind. Begin to get a picture of this elder son. And I think as we take the picture, we will understand why he thought he had the right to be angry about the kind of celebration that they were doing for the younger son who wasted the Father's inheritance, wo transgressed the Father's regulation, who didn't serve the Father the way he should. Now, ermm, now, let's go on please.

Anchor Lady: And he said... *and yet thou never gavest me a kid...*

Peter: Now, he said, *I've served You all these while but You didn't give me...* Now, we are understanding the psychology of this elder son. Now, he said, *I've done everything I should do... I've given You all I should give, but You have not given me anything...* This was a man who wanted to actually control the Father. This was a man who actually believed, or who had this concept in his mind that the Father owes him something simply because he believes he has given the Father something. Now, you see, we are coming.... Viewers, don't forget the reason why this parable came up in the first place. If you have followed us on the series, Luke 15 from verse 1, we know the reason why the parable came into existence. It was simply because the Pharisees and the Scribes accused Jesus of accepting Publicans and Sinners and they were wondering why Jesus would do that and Jesus gave this parable to clarify their confusion. Now, this is coming to a head; now, we are getting to know who this elder son actually is. He is saying *the reason I've actually paid the price—the reason I'd been a good person, the reason I'd been a very nice person; why I had actually—you know—put myself under lots of inconveniencies is because I thought if I did all that, it would actually be the reason why You should be giving me something.* He said *You've not given me anything; You've not given me anything.* Now, but the person who wasted Your inheritance and the person who didn't serve you well is the person that You've given something to. So, the problem we have now is this elder son cannot seem to reconcile in his mind, *on what basis is this Father giving people things?*

Anchor Lady: hmmm...

Peter: What is the basis of this Father? On what basis do you get things from this Father? What is the requirement by which you get something from this Father? Now, this is where his anger was springing up from. Now, what did he say next, please?

Anchor Lady: *that I might make merry with my friends...*

Peter: That, I, I... It says, on that basis, he said that I might make merry with my friends. Now, we know in this story, we are now beginning to understand what Jesus was driving at. Now, if you've walked with us, we have actually made one point really clear—that Jesus was trying to show through this parable that the elder son had a big confusion about the nature of the Father. This is why we call this series the Prodigal Father series. The error in his thinking was that the Father will give you on the basis that you've been a good person. Now, I want you to see something: the younger son was lost. This is an elder son who also was lost, but this is—this is why it becomes very strange. The younger son was lost because of waywardness, because he was living a life that was outside of the Father's will. But the elder son got lost in knowing the true nature of the Father because of his own goodness. Now, think about it. I said, he was lost because he was good. Now, how can...you are wondering, how can someone be lost because he is good? He is lost because he is good on the basis that he believed that the Father's ground for giving to him will be on the fact that he is good. Now, this is why we talked about the issue of sin being a matter of identity. There's something about humanity that we

always want to use something to justify our lives—to justify our existence, to justify our value. And we look for anything. For this younger son—for this elder son, rather, the basis for justifying himself, the basis of justifying his value to the Father, of justifying his worth to the Father was on his own goodness. See, this is why we need to understand that it is not about whether you are good or whether you are doing evil. It is about, on what have you attached your identity? Anything that we have attached our identity to apart from Christ—even if it is goodness—it is still an attack on the true nature of the Father. And this is where the whole thing, the whole confusion is. Now, we are gonna look at a, a particular instance, I mean, we see... in which we have a man. You know, the rich, young, ruler.

Anchor Lady: Okay...

Peter: The rich, young, ruler actually approached Jesus, and he said *What must I do to gain life eternal? Tell me, what do I need to do?* Because, you see, I would presume this elder son got angry because he was asking the Father, *What again do You want? What again? What again do you want? I served you—*

Anchor Lady:...and I never transgress...

Peter:...*I didn't transgress. What again do you want? And yet, you've not given me anything!* And you see, the rich, young, ruler approached Jesus and said, *What again can I do?*

Anchor Lady: ...*because I've done all the ten commandments...*

Peter:...*to gain eternal life. What again can I do?* And Jesus did say to him, I mean, *Have you done this? Have you done that?* And he said, *I've done all those things—*

Anchor Lady:...*from my youth...*

Peter:...*from my youth. I've done them; I've kept all of them.* But you see what Jesus told him? Jesus said to him, *what? You know what?* (He said) *Go and sell all you have and give it to the poor (and then you will what?) You will become perfect.* And he went away sorrowfully. Now, you see, in that story, of course, you and I know one thing today that the basis for getting saved and going to God's kingdom is not on the basis that you go and sell all you have and then go to heaven, in that case, it means that there will be a lot of people who are doing good works, a lot of humanitarian works and then they will go to heaven as well. And then nobody has to believe in Jesus or believe in the sacrifice of the blood. So, that wasn't what Jesus was driving at. Now, what Jesus was driving at in that story is to drag the man to a point so that he can understand the fact that there is nothing, there is nothing you can do, or there's nothing you can hang your life on that can justify you or qualify you for the kingdom like the rich, young, ruler. So in this particular, I mean, instance of the elder brother; his anger cropped up from the fact that he actually cannot seem to grasp the basis by which the Father was gonna give anything. And this is what we are gonna be rounding off with today. That we, as Christians, we need to come to the understanding of the nature of the Father Who gives because of Himself. Now, that's the word—Who gives because of Himself. Now, James chapter

one tells us, it says *If anybody lacks wisdom, let him ask from God who gives, now, liberally to all men. And it says one thing, without finding faults. NIV Version says He doesn't upbraid. Now, I'm not sure if people do understand that. Now, it says, he gives liberally to all men and He doesn't find faults.* Now, this sounds a bit contrasting to what the elder brother thought about the Father. It says *He didn't find faults.* That is when God gives, He doesn't find faults. Now, think about it, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. So, Jesus didn't die for us on the quality of our lives; He died for us on the quality of His love. God did not give to us because of who we are but because of Who He is. And this is what the elder son got completely wrong because he was thinking that the Father should give him because of who the elder son is and not because of Who the Father is and this is why the anger came up in him when he saw the celebration based on the fact that the Father gave the son, the younger son, something and the younger son did not deserve what the Father gave him. James...tells us that *every good gifts and perfect gifts comes from the Father of light. He said Who does not change like shifting shadows.* He says it's about Him, it's not about us—and this is the basis by which we must approach God anytime we are relating with Him, and this is gonna revolutionise the way we think and how we actually pray and how we actually receive from Him.

Anchor Lady: I think this is the convenient spot where we draw the curtain today so that giving us and our audience the time to go and reflect on this psychology and—to understand the psychology of this elder son who was actually thinking...who was thinking that the basis of receiving is about working, putting himself into labour—

Peter:—so that he can qualify—

Anchor Lady:—and he got it all wrong. So I think it's... that's very deep. So I want us to go back and think about that and so tomorrow, I want to apologize again for starting out late today. So tomorrow, we hope we will start on time. So do join us tomorrow; same time: 7pm UK time, as we continue on this series. Stay blessed and byeeee.

Peter: Thank you. And byeee...