

Episode 8 (Exposé 16): Recreating God In Man's Image

Anchor Lady: Hello viewers (*sound fades in and out*) ...we come in to leave a quick recap of what happened last week. For those who have missed it and to even remind those who are there last week.

Peter: Erm...viewers all over the world...erm...welcome again to Exposé where we will be unveiling the heart of the father and we've been looking at er...this series called the Prodigal Father series and we've been actually looking at journey of the younger son to see how he was able to come in to the revelation of who the father is. And let's not forget one thing, that this Prodigal Father series we're looking at is just Jesus of ... of the goodness of the Father because he actually talks about the fact that *my father is so good that even his hired servants had to eat and they had enough to spend*. And we did say that according to the scriptures, it's the goodness of that leads men to repentance...it's the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. So, a good ministry er...will not just show how angry God can be, it would show how good God can be and that's it.

Anchor Lady: If I remember perfectly well, I remember last week, again, before just positioning the fact that there was an aspect of the positioning into that the younger son said that, *he sinned only against...oh father, have I sinned*. You know...there were...I think there were two things about the Father position that...

Peter: Yeah, that's one thing we did say last week that erm...it seems that erm...a lot people have a very strange notion about what is sin...because when we talk about sin, most people talk about things we do wrong and what we establish in the Prodigal Father series last week in the Book of Luke chapter 15 that when the younger son was on his way back home to his father, he did say, *I have sinned against the father*. So, sin is not about things, sin is about a person because to the younger son all what he did wasn't just about the things that he did, it was about the fact that he was using those things to gain a sense of identity that only the father can give. So, when he was going back home, he knew he had sinned against the father and that was what... (there was a break in the recording at 2:54-58) that episode...in verse 18. Today by the grace of God, we're going to make progress with this. Now, erm...let's go on with the discourse in the mind of the younger son. Look at verse 19...now Luke chapter 15 verse 19, now I want you to follow this...it says in verse 19...this is a commentary that the younger son had in his mind on his way back home. He said, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son, make me like one of your hired servants". And that's it...so he got up and went to his father. Now, look at this, look at what sin did in the life of the younger son. The problem with living riotously and living lasciviously that happened to him wasn't just about him or his thoughts about himself, it was about the thoughts he had for the father. Now watch what he said about the father...he's saying in his mind that *I'll tell my father to make me*. Now, he's trying to manipulate what the father would do to him. You see that's what sin does, sin doesn't just change our mind about ourselves, it changes our mind about the father. That is why the

scripture says, let the wicked man forsake his thoughts because it changes how we see the father. Now, see...have you noticed in this parable of the prodigal father...have you noticed that the...Jesus was silent in this parable about the reaction of the father to what the son did when the son left home. This parable was silent; we didn't know what the father was thinking...we didn't even know if the father change his mind set about the younger son, if the father had a change of plan regarding the younger son. The scripture....the parable was silent about that and why...because if God wanted us to see in this parable, the constancy, the consistency...the unchanging nature of how the father views us...

Anchor Lady: Hmmm...

Peter: And that's why the bible was silent about the reaction of the father. But, the younger son in this parable says, *i will say to my father, change your mind about how you see me*. This is what sin does to humanity, it tries to make us change not just our thoughts but how we want the father to treat us.

Anchor Lady: Hmmm...how the father can see us...

Peter: So, he had a commentary...I mean...he was running commentary in his mind and he said, *I will tell the father to change his mind about me*. And you see this is what we to know about this Prodigal Father series; we need to understand the context of this parable because we've been saying this for the past few weeks ... what was the context of this parable? If you look at Luke chapter 15 from verse 1, we need to know why this parable came into being in the first place. What was the motivation that Jesus had when he gave this parable? What made Jesus to actually speak this parable? We need to know the context. Now, look at Luke 15 from verse 1...look at what actually evoked this parable from Jesus. It says...in Luke 15 verse 1 and 2, *"now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus but the Pharisees and teachers of the law said, this man welcomes sinners and eat with them. Then Jesus told them a parable"*.

Now, viewers, why did Jesus tell them a parable in Luke 15 in verse 2? Simple put, verse 1 tells us the reason because some people said about Jesus, the Pharisees, *Why is he accepting sinners and why is he eating with them?* And that was the reason why Jesus spoke the parable. So it means that if you are wondering or if you are bothered that I'm accepting sinners and eating with them, I will tell you a parable to explain why I'm accepting sinners...why I'm not striking them dead...or why the publicans are not running away from me, I will tell you a parable. So what was the point of the parable? The point of the parable of the prodigal father or whatever you call it is to redefine how God sees men. The publicans, the sinners, how God sees them. It was a kind of redefinition of the father's view. And that was why in this verse 19, the younger son said, *I wish my father can change his mind about how he sees me*. I don't know...you see, this is why the scripture warns us of creating God in our image. You know, in Exodus, he warns the Israelites. He said, *don't liken God to any form...any image, not what you can see in the heavens or what you can see on the earth*. God says don't do it, because there's one thing about

humanity, we always try to carve God... we always try to recreate God into our image...what we think God should look like to us and that is why the younger son in verse 19 said, when I'm going back home now, I know I've done something evil, I have wasted my father's resources; I have become lascivious, so on my way home, I will try to convince my father to change his nature. So that's why he said *I will tell him, make me like one of your hired servants...*

Anchor Lady: That's making another image of the father...

Peter: I will try to recreate the father...

Anchor Lady: ...that's some idolatry

Peter: ...because I would try to recreate an image. So he's trying to say, *I will tell the father how to treat me*. And this is the whole point of the parable of Jesus...that humans have become experts in recreating the kind of God they want to see...the kind of God they want to worship... the kind of God they want to be with... And that's what he said in his mind. *I will tell Him how to treat me... I will tell the Father to treat me like a servant*

Anchor Lady: That's an image of idolatry, manipulating the Father,

Peter: recreating God into the kind of version of God that we think makes sense. And that's why, as we said, the quality of our Christian life, is all going to boil down to the revelation of God that we have. And if you were with us last Saturday, we made a point about a man that actually did get the... you know...the one talent. The one that was unproductive with his one talent in that parable of Jesus...what he said. He said what? He said *I know you are a hard task master and I know that you wanna reap where you didn't sow*. Now, we know the reason why he was unproductive with the one talent was how he viewed the master. So, you cannot go far in your Christian journey beyond the revelation of the father that you have. So, the fact is the younger son in Luke 15 verse 19 was going back home and as he was going back home, he had at the back of his mind that I'm gonna recreate the father; I'm gonna tell the father how to view me. And this is not about the younger son, this is about humanity. And you see, there's a picture of the father that we need to have—this father that doesn't change like shifting shadows... this God who actually doesn't change like shifting shadows and that's the God that we serve, that's the God that we worship; that's the God that we live for and we live by...

Anchor Lady: I just hope our viewers will be able to see the scriptural sense in this parable... especially knowing the consistency of the father's nature...the consistency of the father's disposition to this younger son, it's just...it remains unchanged

Peter: The true nature of the father... you see, when I look at this parable of Luke 15, I begin to wonder, er, the reason again, I said it the other time, why Jesus had to speak the parable... because up to that time, Israel, the Father sees the publicans had an idea of who the father was, or who the father is... and Jesus' parable was going to redefine who the father was and you know why He did that? Because they were wondering why he was accepting the publicans and sinners and that is what we see in verse 19. Now, let's make progress with this... and

that's... in verse... he says *I'm no longer worthy to be called your son and make me like one of your hired servants*. And verse 20 says *So he arose and he left*. And then the next verse says *But while he was still a long way off...*

Anchor Lady: Before you go on, I'm really bothered about this younger son and... why would he want to... why does he want to manipulate the father, why does he want the father to think...

Peter: You mean, why would he want to recreate the kind of father he wants to meet when he gets back home?

Anchor Lady: Yes, why would he go all the length and...

Peter: Now, there's something about humans, about people. It's called the spirit of religion. You see, what religion always does, or what religion will always do is to recreate God in his own image. That's religion. You see, that's why the younger son was going to say... How can you think you can tell the father how to treat you? He said *I will say to the Father...*

Anchor Lady: ...to mete out the punishment that he thinks is due to him

Peter: ...*to make me like a hired servant. I will tell the Father what to do*. So religion has its own idea about what God and Who God should be and religion will always create a God that is convenient for their ways...and that's why the younger son was going back home and saying *I'm going to tell the father how to treat me*

Anchor Lady: and he felt that that will satisfy justice

Peter: and he felt that that will satisfy justice...and that's it. And that was the notion that he had at the back of his mind when he was going back home and he was really surprised at what he was going to meet back home

Anchor Lady: And that is why some people don't know the sacrifice of Christ... the sacrifice... they say they are going to make their own way...they are going to do this and do these rules...I'm going to follow this...and so...it's just like the same similar statement that the son is making... I'm going to say don't do...make me... I'm not going to take all your perfect gift... I'm not going to take all your perfect justice... I'm not going to take all your grace, but yes, I think I'm going to take this... I will give you the rules that I'm going to follow. I'm going to do this... I'm going to inconvenience myself... I'm going to do this extra, I'm going to stay away from this... and I feel I will satisfy your justice

Peter: Hmmm... hmmm... You're making a very good point there because this parable is just showing us expressly that this father is constant in his affection. He's just a constant father... And there's something I want us to look at, viewers, there's something... the scripture there always always baffles my mind whenever I think about it...and it's 2 Timothy chapter 2... It's a scripture that if you meditate on it, it tells you about the kind of father that Jesus was presenting in this parable of the prodigal father. I mean, look at second Timothy chapter 2

verse 13. There it says, it doesn't matter what version you are reading, it gives the same kind of words... it says *If we are faithless...he remains faithful* Why? *Because He can deny Himself*. God will not deny his nature. God will not deny who He is. God will not deny his person. So it means the reason why God is good is about Himself. It's about who God is... It's about His nature. So if you look at the father in this parable in Luke 15, the reason why this father is good, the reason why this father is not changing... the reason why this father is not reactive—you know, I like that word 'reactive' because the kind of notion that we have of the father is a reactive father. *The father of light...The father of spirits... The God of all grace*—He is an active, not a reactive God. It means He is good all by Himself. It says, 2 Timothy 2, it says The reason why He is good is because he cannot deny himself. I'm not sure if we do grab that. The reason why He is good, it says in 2 Timothy 2:13, is because he cannot deny himself. So the scripture is saying for God to become unfaithful towards us or for God not to become consistent in his love towards us, God has to deny himself. So it is not about you, it's got nothing to do with you...it's about who God is. And see, the younger son didn't actually grab this understanding. He thought it would be about him, because of what he has done, but the father is good because of the father. The father is good because of his nature. The father is good because he cannot deny himself and that's what 2 Timothy 2:13 tells us... a God who is constant, who is unchanging in His nature.

Anchor Lady: What I'm finding so amusing in this story is, in this younger son today, I'm able to see the spirit of religion in the son... yes, he was trying to pay the price... he doesn't want to accept what the Father is willing is ready to offer...what is always on the table... what is always on the table? We have the acceptance. You are accepted in the beloved. You are accepted as a son. That's on the table; that's the offer on the table all along...while in the house...the offer on the table is you're accepted in the son. But he caught the spirit of religion and want to pay the price... *I'm drafting my own that I seem is appropriate*... That's why you see some people that they lay on themselves some other burdens—they are drafting what is appropriate, not what is on the table... so despising what the father is giving and feeling like the father is not wise enough, is not good enough, is not rich enough—everything we see is fighting the offer of the father, the father is too lenient, he is too gracious. They have been fighting against the offer. Either feeling it's too good to be true or feeling I need to do more... That's the thing

Peter: I need to recreate the father in a kind of way that I think is sensible, in a kind of way that I think is rational. Viewers, there's one key point that we have made today if you are on this episode. We've made the point that there's something about humanity...we try to recreate God in our image...we try to redefine God the way we want him to be... and we see the younger son making this same attempt. He said *I will go back to my father and I will tell my father how my father should treat me*. Yeah, see, there's this revelation of the father. We have to accept the father that was revealed through Jesus Christ of his unchanging nature, of his goodness and we have to agree with the scriptures. In 2 Timothy 2:13 that the reason why the father is faithful is because he cannot deny himself; it's about his nature...it's got nothing to do with you, it's got nothing to do with me...it's about his nature. So it means if the father is not faithful with the covenant he has with you, it means the father has denied himself and that

cannot happen. It said because he cannot deny himself, he would remain faithful. Now, watch it. It said, even if we are faithless. That... I mean... so it means all the time the younger son became faithless and he followed his own path that he drew for himself, the father never changed, not for one second. Our God is not reactive, our God is active. We serve an active God who does things because of himself and not because of us...because of his nature. And so, we need to have this hope secured unchanging. You see, it's an anchor. Hebrews 6 says *this is an anchor for the soul*. You see, for most of us, our anchor doesn't hold strong in the midst of the storm, we need an anchor; something that holds strong no matter the wind, no matter the storm, this thing holds firm. No So we have this hope beyond the veil...and this is the hope...the anchor that we have in an unchanging faithful ever-consistent ever-loving God who does everything because of himself and is part of us and not because of us...and that's it.

Anchor Lady: Personally, I will like to close with this. I will like to encourage our viewers... I don't know whichever journey, this part of journey you are in...just like the younger son and telling the father how he should treat you...because some people are rejecting the offer of...salvation and saying no. They are rejecting the offer of sonship and said no, no...I just want to be an hired servant; I want to be an hireling... treat me like an hireling... people are coming like that... treat me like an hireling... I don't want to take this offer... the offer is too big... I can't accept the offer. I just want to encourage you that the offer is on the table, just take it as it is... take the father as it is, stop fighting... stop fighting all that God has to offer...all of his benefit. So don't come and be saying no. He has called you as his son, so don't settle for anything else...

Peter: In fact, there's something that comes to mind... for some, I mean, atimes, as Christians we get to a point in our lives when we have some experiences...unpleasant experiences...negative experiences and at the back of our minds, we think *Well I think I deserve this from the father... I deserve this negative experience from the father... because there was a time when I've not really been as good as I should be or in the past, I've failed the father anyway... So I think withtheexperience in my life, I think it's worth it...I think this could be my way of paying the price for the bad thing I've done*. You see, now listen, we are not simply saying that there are no consequences for doing the wrong thing...there are consequences for doing the wrong thing. The younger son on his journey of self-discovery, he paid the price. Why? The bible says that he began to be in want. He had scarcity. He began to eat with the pigs... No man gave him anything... You pay the price for making wrong choice but the price you are paying is not because the father is punishing you; because we saw in this parable, Jesus was representing the father to humanity...that everything that happened to the younger son had nothing to do with the father. The price he paid, the negative consequences was because of the wrong choices...but the father was ever waiting, ever waiting, ever loving, ever faithful. So there was no point trying to recreate God in his image when he was saying that he will tell the father how to treat him... So this is what we need to know about, up to this verse 19 that we've gotten to in this prodigal father series.

Anchor Lady: So I think that's your last word for our viewers. I want to take that as the last word for them. So till next week when we see you the same time, in case you are having any issue with any of the connection maybe from the Exposé page, you can join our individual facebook page or something that will come back to repost the episode. We do hope to work on these things and get better in the next episodes. So till next episode, when we'll see you, don't go and make any image...

Peter: Don't don't don't don't recreate God in your own version. Don't recreate God in your image. He's good because of Himself. God bless you.

Anchor Lady: Okay, byeee

Peter: byeee