

# NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Third Sunday in Lent – March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 (11:11 am)

## I DID IT MY WAY

*Psalm 85*

*Ezekiel 33:7-20*

*1 Corinthians 10:1-13*

**Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32**

### Jesus Calls You to Repentance

“Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). By this warning, the Lord would turn us away from wickedness and bring us to life in Himself. For He is patient with us, that we would not be cut down in our sin but live and bear fruit in Him. As He lives, the Lord has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezek. 33:11). So the Scriptures have been “written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11), that we should not desire evil but trust in Christ. He alone is faithful, the Rock who feeds us with His “spiritual food” and pours out His “spiritual drink” (1 Cor. 10:3-4).

The parable of the Prodigal Son is a powerful reminder of the consequences of self-reliance and the immeasurable grace of our Heavenly Father. **The younger son, driven by impatience and a desire for independence, asks for his inheritance, essentially wishing his father was already dead.** He squanders everything on reckless living and finds himself destitute. Only when he reaches the lowest point does he realize his need for his father’s love and return home in repentance. To his surprise, his father not only forgives him but embraces him with open arms, celebrating his return.

This story mirrors the spiritual journey of humanity—our tendency to choose our own path over God’s, and His unwavering love and mercy that call us back.

### Ingratitude and Disrespect

The younger son’s demand for his inheritance is an act of deep ingratitude and disrespect. In Jewish tradition, inheritance was typically divided after the father’s death, with the eldest son receiving a double portion (Deuteronomy 21:17). By asking for his share prematurely, the younger son essentially tells his father, **“I want what you can give me, but I don’t want you.”** How often do we approach God in the same way—seeking His blessings but not valuing a true relationship with Him?

## **Immaturity and Impulsiveness**

The son's decision to leave home reflects immaturity. He does not understand the responsibilities that come with wealth and freedom. Likewise, we sometimes rush into life's choices without seeking God's wisdom, only to find ourselves lost and broken.

## **Independence**

"Doing It Our Own Way" – The desire for independence, to live life "our way," is central to this story. The younger son believes he can find fulfillment apart from his father. This is the essence of sin—choosing our own way instead of God's. Isaiah 53:6 says, ***"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way."*** Yet, when we rely solely on ourselves, we often end up in a place of emptiness and despair.

## **Wastefulness and Worldly Pleasures**

The son wastes his inheritance on reckless living. The younger son's journey into the far country leads to wasteful living. This represents the choices we make when we live for the pleasures of the world, spending our time, energy, and resources on things that ultimately don't satisfy. This is a picture of what happens when we invest in worldly desires instead of in the eternal riches of God's kingdom.

## **The Illusion of True Friendship**

When the son has money, he has so-called "friends," but once his wealth is gone, so are they. This reveals the emptiness of relationships built on selfish gain. ***True friendship, like God's love, is not based on what we can provide but on mutual care and faithfulness.***

## **A Moment of Clarity – Repentance**

Luke 15:17 says, "When he came to himself..." This moment marks a turning point. The son realizes the depth of his mistakes and decides to return home, not expecting to be restored as a son, but willing to serve as a hired hand. True repentance is recognizing our sin, humbling ourselves before God, and turning back to Him.

## **Undeserved Love and the Father's Grace**

The son does not deserve his father's love. He has been reckless and disobedient. Yet, before he can even finish his apology, his father interrupts him, embraces him, and restores

him. This is a beautiful image of God's grace. He does not wait for us to earn His forgiveness—He freely gives it. Romans 5:8 reminds us, "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

### **The Father's Waiting Heart**

The father had been waiting, watching the road, longing for his son's return. This reflects God's heart toward us. No matter how far we stray, He eagerly desires to welcome us back. It is never too late to return to the Father's embrace.

### **GOD DID IT HIS WAY.**

The younger son tried to live life his way and ended up broken and empty. But the Father did things his way—offering love, grace, and restoration. This is the gospel message: we fall, we fail, we rebel—but God, in His infinite mercy, welcomes us back with open arms. He does not hold our past against us; instead, He clothes us in righteousness and celebrates our return.

Let us trust in the Father's way—His way of grace, mercy, and unconditional love. Amen.