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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Luke 15:17
Lesson #2
The Prodigal's Insight
5/10/2026

1

Prodigal Son

2

“There are two serious arguments against the existence of the Christian God -

The challenge of
suffering

The challenge of
science”

Thomas Aquinas

suffering
awakens deep issues of life.

How do we define right & wrong? Why are human's so unique?
Why are nearly all cultures religion based? Why do people who seem to have everything the world can offer, commit suicide?
Why do we die? What do we live for? Why is life so difficult?

science
struggles to answer these questions without the Christian narrative.

3

Matthew 6

“22 The lamp of the body is the eye; **if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.** 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”

Addressing our “soul sorrow” starts with **seeing the core issues behind our anger, fear, suffering, and longings.**

Sight and Light

4

The Parable of Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

1. The younger son demands **independence** and leaves home. vs.11-13a
2. He becomes **destitute** by wasting his wealth and is unable to face the hard times that life brings. vs.13b-14
3. He **seeks help** from within the distant land, but this does not change his condition. vs.15-16
4. He then **COMES TO HIS SENSES.** vs.17a

“But when he **came to his senses**,...”

Literally - Greek text “coming to himself”	Modern English equivalent - “getting it together”
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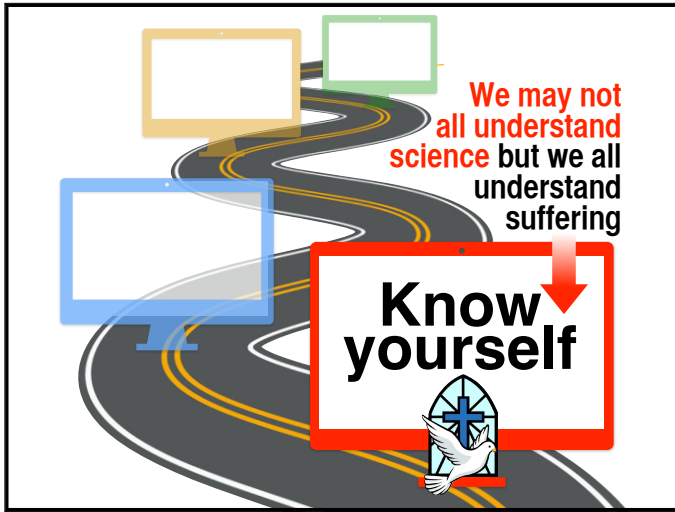
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Luke 15

“17 But when he came to his senses, he said, **‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’”**

Lament
can lead to
Light and Life
or Depression and Death

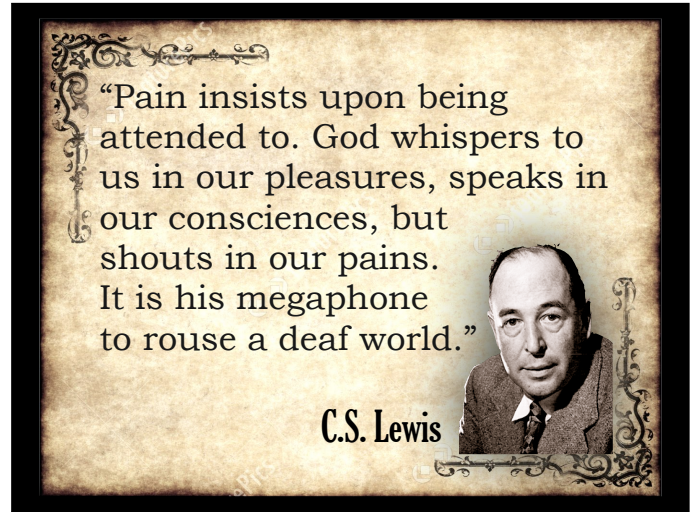
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We may not all understand science but we all understand suffering

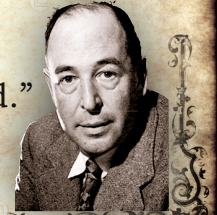
Know yourself



8

“Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

C.S. Lewis



The Prodigal Son's choices in the distant land

- #1 He could see himself as a loser and commit suicide.
- #2 He could keep trying to find life in the distant land - “Good luck!”.
- #3 He could be jealous of his older brother which would add more pain.
- #4 He could wait for his father to come and bail him out.
- #5 He could come to his senses see the light, repent, and come home.

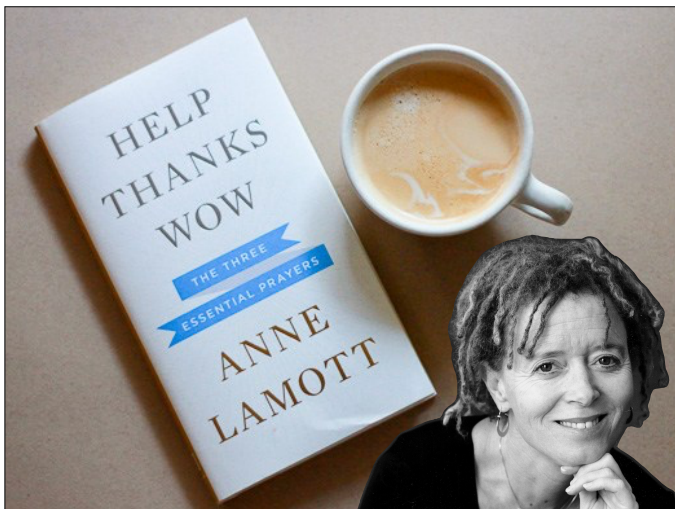
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From mourning to ministering *Matthew 5:3-12*

“3 Blessed are the **poor** in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the **gentle**, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

“7 Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy. 8 Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who have been **persecuted** for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and **persecute** you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.”


10




11

1 Corinthians 11

“28 But **let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.”



Mother Teresa
“In the end, dear friend, it is always **between us and God**, not between us and them (or it).”



12



“Fear + false hope
= despair/chaos
> opportunity for
my control.”

Satan is NOT against
faith, hope, and love
so long as he can
control its subject
and object.





Bane
Batman's foe in
“The Dark Knight”

13

Pain can be a window
into our soul, opening
us to the insight that
helps us know our
true self, our real
home, and our
soul's peace.


Repentance

14

Repentance
μετανοέω
metanoeo

meta - “after”
noeo - “to perceive”




“upon reflection I get it.”

“to renew the **mind**
so as to change the **heart**
and shape **behavior**.”

15

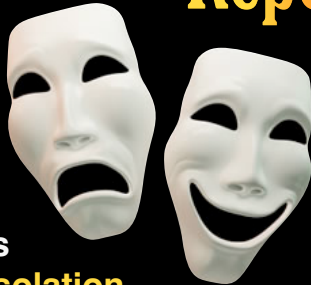
Jeremiah 2:13
“For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me,
the fountain of living
waters, to hew for
themselves cisterns,
broken cisterns, that
can hold no water.”



Repentance calls for
LEAVING something and
CLEAVING to something else.

16

Repentance



Feels
the isolation
and shame of
independence / rebellion.

Sees
the glory
and beauty
of our true
identity &
home.

17

A vision of our spiritual home is important.

Romans 8:18
“For I consider that the **sufferings** of this present
time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory**
that is to be revealed to us.”

When we shop for flowers



We
look for:

We
don't
look for:



18

The pattern of Paul's letters

What Christ has done **for & in** us.

Our **wealth** in Christ by grace through faith

Affirmation

What Christ is doing **in and through** us.

Our **walk** in Christ by grace through discipline

Exhortation

Who we are and what we have

What we are called to do with it in this life

Ephesians 1

"18 [I pray that] the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe.

19

Hebrews 12:2

"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who **for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus models for us the joy of seeing beyond the cross.

Four vital insights shaped Paul's soul:

Glory

- the vision of Paradise (2 Cor.12)

Guilt

- the shame of his flesh (Rom. 7)

Grace

- the mercy of God in Christ (Rom. 8)

Gift

- the power of weakness in ministry (2 Cor.12)

Philippians 4:9

"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."

20

"The Christian worldview makes better sense **of my inner and outer worlds** than any of the alternatives."



Edward Carnell

"Christianity does not simply make sense **to** us; it also makes sense **of** us."



Tim Keller



Alister McGrath

21

Steps to repentance

#1 Feel the Pain of the Land

I must let my responses to life expose the spiritual condition and longing of my soul.

#2 Face the Problem of the Longing

I must address the root challenge, not just the symptoms.

#3 Follow the Path of the Light

I must "get it together".

22

God's Image within us enables us and draws us to repent.

- ✓ **Trauma** (painful life experiences) are God's "wake up call" from His Image within us. As physical pain speaks to the body, suffering speaks to the soul.
- ✓ **Anger, Fear, & Despair** are spiritual "dog whistles" that tell us we are in a distant land.
- ✓ **Longings** for relief are also a sign of God's image, equipping and enabling us to "come to our senses".
- ✓ **Repentance** starts with "coming to our senses" with regard to our true (spiritual) identity and home.

23

After carefully listening to ourselves, **we must talk to ourselves.**



that's Next week

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