

## The Prodigal Son

By **THE EDITOR**

(Stenographically Reported)

My evening message is based on the Bible story of the Prodigal Son, as recorded in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, from the eleventh to the twenty-fourth verse. "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.' And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it. And let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.' And they began to be merry."

I am going to discuss this wonderful parable. I want to apply it to the present-day life of our young people, and trust that we may all see the great lesson that it has for every one of us. A certain man had two sons. The younger son became dissatisfied with the home life. It became too tame for him. He wanted some adventure. He wanted a bit of wild life. He chafed under parental restraint. He wanted to go away. There was a spirit in him that would no longer tolerate home discipline. He was one of those fellows that knew more than Dad and Mother put together. He became independent, and felt no more need for advice from anybody.

I remember when I was twenty years old. I thought that I knew everything. When I was twenty-five, I did not know quite so much. When I was thirty, I discovered that I did not know much after all. I am convinced today that, if any man needs to know, it is the man that stands before you.

The period of adolescence is a dangerous period. That is the period in a young

man's or a young woman's life when parents have to be very careful with them. Nowadays, girls of twelve and fourteen years of age are speeding along as fast as girls of twenty and twenty-two of other days. The spirit of the automobile age and the fast furious pace, at which business is traveling, has injected the spirit of recklessness into the young people. They can no longer be satisfied with the slow and cautious movement of their elders. Even the young children are doing freely what their grandmothers hesitated to do.

This younger son became restless. He wanted to go out, and see the world for himself. The very thought of being an independent adventurer fired his imagination. But be careful, Young Man, "all that glitters is not gold."

*" 'All that glitters is not gold!'  
That's the story often told.  
Stay at home, my Lad,  
With your mother and your dad!  
Don't roam from the fold.*

*When you're down, this world's unkind,  
Friends are very hard to find  
Stay at home, my Lad,  
With your mother and your dad!  
All that glitters is not gold!"*

You can read in novels of the wonderful cities and the wonderful people that are generally portrayed, but when you come to rub shoulders with them, all the glitter rubs off. More than one young man has come to the altar, confessing that he bitterly regretted the day when he asked his good, old Dad to give him what was coming to him so that he may go away to some far-off country to make his fortune. But you know the spirit of the age: "Oh, Dad, you are too much of an old fogey. Those things were all right in your day. But remember, Dad, we are living in a different age now." Throw off the parental restraint. That's the spirit of the age. "Mother, you are too old-fashioned. Remember, Mother, you are not living in the past. This is the twentieth century." Tired of being disciplined. That's the condition of the young people in general today.

This prodigal son came from a wealthy home. His portion was considerable. He started out as a young man of means. But he was a prodigal just the same. *He was a prodigal before he left his father's house* and even before he asked for the portion that fell to him. The prodigal spirit was in him. He became discontented with his own people and with his own home. He was not satisfied with his lot. He did not care for the part of the business that, undoubtedly, his father had turned over for him to manage. Anywhere but home, anything but what he had to do, would satisfy him. His father

pleaded with him not to go. He was told of the dangers he would meet in the world. The world, his father said, is not safe for young people. They would take away what he had, and then leave him in the ditch. But the young fellow was determined to go. He had made up his mind, and there was no changing his decision.

So, the Father divided his property into two parts, and gave to the younger son what belonged to him. The young fellow immediately turned his portion into cash, and pocketed it. He was rich. He had money. He had ready, cold cash in his own pocket. It wasn't merely real estate that he had, or investments in stocks and bonds. No, he was actually rich in gold. He could lay his hands on hard, cold cash. But he was a prodigal just the same.

There are people who think that as long as a man has good clothes to wear, has plenty to eat, a good bed to sleep in and lots of money to spend, he is not a prodigal at all. The popular idea of a prodigal is a man who has gone broke. A fellow who has been knocked flat on his back, lying helpless in a dirty, torn hat, a dilapidated coat, an over-patched up pair of trousers and shoes that permitted all his toes to stick out. A fellow, who is miserable, clothed in rags, and at whom the whole world hurls its curses and maledictions. That is generally the concept of a prodigal. But there are prodigals now living in the homes of the wealthy. They have servants to wait on them. They dine like kings and princes. They are dressed in the height of fashion. They are driven in Rolls-Royces. They spend thousands of dollars a day for sports and amusements. But they are prodigals just the same. They are even well educated and highly intellectual. They are capable and they are wealthy. But they are prodigals just the same. The only difference between the down-and-out prodigal and the rich prodigal is that *the latter* is *harder to reach*. May the Lord touch some of them tonight!

I presume that this high-class prodigal did not stop to think until he hit bottom. It was not until he hit bottom that he came to himself. He did not come to his senses until he lost all his money. He did not come to reason until all his friends had deserted him. So, after he started on the downward journey, he kept on going. And, oh, friends, how easy it is to go down! It is just like going down a slide. And the devil sees to it that the slide is greased. He makes everything attractive and appealing to the senses. He turns on the brightly colored lights, plays the latest hits, and personally escorts you to the gay section of Broadway.

This happened sometime ago when New York City was wide open. I saw the thousands coming out of the theatres around Forty-second Street and Broadway, near Times Square. As I saw the pleasure-drunk throng and heard their songs of revelry, I thought of modern Nineveh. Here was a display of reckless hilarity that was calculated to appeal to the vigorous young man and young woman. But, right in the wake of this stream of pleasure, I saw the wreckage left by the revelers of other days. The following day, I read the story of a woman who was found dead. She had been picked up off the street. The pastor of "the little church around the corner" was called to bury her. This man was well known to the actors and actresses. He was the man who

ministered to all their needs. The poor, old woman that had been picked up dead was just a beggar. The night before, she was out on the streets, at the hour when the theatres disgorged their hordes into Broadway. She slowly moved down the sidewalk as she tried to sell matches to the theatre crowd. Poor, old soul! She was weak, barely able to move with the aid of a cane. She was begging the people to buy a box of matches. The rich and proud gentlemen turned away from her. They avoided her. The ladies did not notice her much as they, in their silks and fashionable gowns, were escorted to their Lincolns and Packard's. Nobody saw her as she crumpled down into a little heap. By and by, the policeman came along his beat. He almost stumbled over the poor, broken body. When he picked her up, she was dead—had been dead for some time. It was in the middle of winter, and the few rags she wore were no proof at all against the freezing cold. Poor, beggar woman! Who was she?

Go back twenty-five years. There, on the screen of memory, you will see the picture of this woman, when she was twenty-five years younger. What a pretty face! What an attractive figure! How those eyes sparkle! How her smile captivates! Who is she? She's Broadway's latest. She is the "Darling" of New York's playgoers. She is the pet of the wealthy, pleasure seeker. That was in the days when champagne flowed like water, and she was the object of many a toast. But she had reached the end of a long journey into a far country. She was the daughter of a minister. She had a good home, a good father and a good mother. But she took a step on the way that leads downwards. And this was the end of her journey. It did not take the New York papers long to dig up her story. It was published in time to be read at the breakfast table. Oh, what a cruel world!

But in the hilarity of the moment, in the joy supreme of the day's pleasure, we forget that the prodigal son did not start out to be a swine feeder. "Mr. Price," I hear him say, "If you think that I am starting out to feed swine, you are crazy. Me feed swine! Why I am not that sort. I come from a different family. A swine feeder! And me a Jew! That's unthinkable. Whoever heard of a Jew feeding swine? That's a despicable occupation. A hog is an unclean animal. It isn't fit to eat. We don't touch its flesh. Me feed swine! Me in the hog pen! What do you mean? But I tell you where you will find me— down at the nightclub on Broadway. Here's my card. And, by the way, we're going to have a party tonight. We'll have a good jazz orchestra, plenty of drinks, and a bevy of beauties. Will you join us?" Yes, I have seen him. His pockets were lined with silver, *but he was a prodigal just the same.*

Listen, Young Man! Listen, Young Woman! This message is for you especially. *I want to tell you that the devil will make it easy for you to start going down.* He will take you to a good starting place, and he will see that somebody is there to get you started. He will make it a point to furnish you the pleasure with the most kick in it. He will give you the sweetest wine and the best music first. The devil is too slick to give you the dregs first. He is too sly to let you see the end from the beginning. Don't let anybody tell you that there is no pleasure in sin. Sin has the most seductive pleasure. It is

intoxicating. It is overwhelming. That's the reason that I do not want to get into the whirl of it. I want to keep away from its fatal vortex that has sucked down many a man, to come up nevermore. That's why Paul says to abstain from the very appearance of evil.

Sure, you will have a good time. I understand what it means to get a car full of young people; get out the ukulele; and sing those peppy songs; and drive to the roadhouse. Once you are in there, you can pull out the hip bottle, and drink Mabel's toast. It's all right; Mabel won't tell. There's a lot of kick in it, isn't there? But I have followed their trail back from the roadhouse. And I have seen the wreck-age all along the way. Out on the sea of life, you will find them now—just derelicts, a menace to safe and profitable navigation. But they did not start out to be like that. They just wanted to be smart.

As soon as this young fellow started out, he did not lack for friends. They swarmed about him as sea gulls flock about a ship. He was free with money, and he had plenty. He was a real sport and a good scout. "Religion! Oh! What do we care about religion? We are too young for that." That's the way they talked. And he spent his money right and left. And the more he spent, the more friends he made. He had all kinds of friends, as long as he had all kinds of money. The ways were well greased, and he was sliding along nicely.

The devil said, "Come on, Boys!" and he went along with the bunch. For his own special benefit, the devil himself saw to it that every light was lit. And he went down one step at a time. He followed the sinuous trail that the serpent made. The devil designed those curves in the road, so that after the first turn, you can neither see the beginning nor the ending. You don't see your starting point, and you don't know where you are going. The devil will never give you any idea of how far you have gone from home until it is too late. He does not allow you to be conscious of the fact that you are lost until he has got you. He will fill your life with thrills and excitement until he gets a sure hold on you. First, it's just a little ride. Then, it's just a social drink from the hip bottle. You know what I am talking about. Those things make the blood run a little faster. They are exhilarating. But after you fall into the trap, the devil himself will commence to damn you, and will make your life a hell on earth. Then you will find that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Young Brother, Young Sister, I am especially pleading with you tonight. *Before you get too far—stop!* Stop and you will show real grit and stamina, real manhood and real womanhood. Turn your back on the ways of sin, and make your way back home. Brother, Sister, which way are you going?

I remember the story of the two young men that came from Vermont. Their father was a merchant prince. He was very successful in his chosen profession, and had accumulated much of this world's goods before he died. At his death, the boys sold the father's property, turning it into liquid cash. Their home was a Christian home, so these two boys were Christians. One became a prominent preacher in

Chicago. Although he was a pastor of a rich and flourishing, aristocratic church, he did not trim his messages to suit the rich man's pocketbook. He preached evangelistic sermons, always having the desire to win some soul for Christ. His was a fashionable pulpit, but he followed the old-fashioned ways. He organized his young people for street meetings and factory meetings. At the noon hour, a band of workers would go into the shops to take the message to the men while they ate their lunches. After suppertime, when men and women were strolling the sidewalks downtown, his young workers would be engaged in their street service. He was so earnest and untiring in his labors for the Master that his influence was felt all over Chicago. He was oftentimes seen at the Pacific Garden Mission and in other rescue missions.

For years, he had lost track of his brother Hal. Hal was in the ministry too. But Hal was a different type of a preacher. He catered to the congregation. He had said to his brother, "A preacher should be a good mixer. These are new days. The old order has changed." So Hal had a different vision. For fifteen years, his brother had not heard of his whereabouts. One night, after preaching in a mission. This well-known Chicago preacher was passing a saloon. As he came opposite the entrance, he stopped. A familiar voice was coming out of that saloon. He recognized the voice. He went in. He saw a man at a wine table. A hopeless derelict he was. How dissolute and miserable did he appear! It was his brother Hal. And he was preaching his old sermons to the drunken crowd. They were having a good time at Hal's expense. They made all sorts of funny remarks and cracked obscene jokes about the subject of his sermons. They were filling him with beer. And the worse he got tanked up, the harder he preached. He was quoting Scripture, and using Christian terminology, while the air was filled with arrant blasphemy.

The noted minister took his drunken brother into his arms, hugging him to his bosom. He took him home. He washed him, doctored him up, and put him to a good bed. But Hal had become a victim of delirium tremens. After suffering awfully, he died. His brother tried to preach the funeral sermon, but he broke down. He could not bear the thought of the wreckage before him. Why, Hal used to be the fellow with sparkling blue eyes, and a rippling laughter. But now, what a difference! A joyful life once led to a terrible death now. That's the wages of sin. "Abandon Hope," that motto in Dante's *Inferno*, may be appropriately written over the halls of sin, as people enter there.

Young Man, Young Woman, I plead with you. In memory of your saintly mother, in reverence of your godly father, turn your back upon the devil, and turn to God. And you will find real and permanent happiness.

The young prodigal went down, down, down! Every step he took, took him down another step, because he was headed downwards. Finally, he got so low down that, when he took the next step, he stepped into a hog pen. And he became a swine feeder. He was the only human being in that pen. The other creatures there were swine. The place was made for the swine, not for people. But this fellow was headed

that way, and he landed there, because he kept on going. He was by himself. Where are his friends? They are not in sight now. They have forsaken him. They are glad to get rid of him. They did not want a beggar on their hands. Yes, he did think that they were real friends. But they were only his money friends. *Your real friend, Brother and Sister, is the man who stands by you through thick and thin.* He is your friend who lends you a hand to get you out of a hole, without asking how you got in there. Your real friend is not concerned about how you got in. He is only worrying about how to get you out. Ninety-nine out of every hundred friends that the devil introduces to you will desert you when the shrieking winds begin to howl.

Oh, yes, once he was in the cabarets of Broadway, so to speak. He used to be the life of the party. Girls were attracted to him as flies are drawn to the honey jar. He had plenty of gold, and the poor fellow did not realize that the so-called friends wanted gold more than they did him. He used to scatter nickels on the floor, and toss silver pieces to the dancing girls. That was the life. He was living in a land of enchantment where Pleasure became a slave to carry out his every wish. But this lasted only as long as he could pay the price. Suddenly, his bloated pocketbook blew up! And he landed in the hog pen!

“Where are you going, my young Friend?” we ask the youthful prodigal. “I am going to have a good time,” says he in a careless way. “Where are you now, and what are you doing,” we ask months later. The poor fellow is not so very desirous to tell us of his whereabouts and his occupation. But we find him in the pigpen, feeding the swine. He is minus his tuxedo, his derby and his pumps. But for his girded loins, he would be completely naked. The devil had stripped him. He is tramping around in the filth and mud of the hog pen. The hog rancher throws over the fence a huge basketful of husks. The squealing pigs and grunting hogs go after it. Reluctantly, yet gladly, he joins the swine in their search for what little bit of grain there was left among the husks.

Going out to have a good time! How different was his intention from his actual condition. From the night club on Broadway to the hog pen on a swine ranch! Once he dined with the silk-gowned and perfumed ladies. Now he is starving among the begrimed and ill-smelling occupants of the hog pen. He remembered what he used to be, and he realizes what he is now. He was once a nobleman’s son, but now only a swine feeder. *Then he came to himself.* Well, it’s about time that he came to himself. It is about time that he found himself. He needed himself to lead him out of that pen, and back to his father’s house. You see, Friends, it was not himself that led him down and out. In the heart of the sinner, I don’t care who he is or how deep in sin he may be, there is a desire for God. It may lie buried, deeply buried under a mass of sinful things, *but that hunger for God is there just the same.* That’s the hunger that the world can never satisfy. There is always an emptiness that remains unfilled after you have eaten every dish that the devil has on his table. You know that I am speaking the truth. Many times, you have gone out to get the world to satisfy all your cravings. And as

many times, you have come home dissatisfied more than ever. You know that I am telling the truth. There is something in you that cries out for God ever since you reached the age of accountability. So, having tried everything in a vain effort to satisfy all his cravings, and finding himself more dissatisfied than ever, the prodigal boy, at last, came to himself.

“I’ve been a fool,” he confessed. And allowing sweet memories to pave the way homeward, he continues to muse. “Father has a beautiful home. Father was good to me. Mother always loved me. Brother has everything that is good for him.” And feeling that he could never again be considered fit to associate with them, he withdraws his thoughts from his own people, and begins to think about the servants. “They all have comfortable beds. And the kitchen table is always loaded down with everything good to eat.” And coming to himself again, he adds, “And look at me, I’m almost naked. Perishing with hunger. Trying to keep from starving with the husks that’s good for hogs only.” He is now disgusted with his condition, and he decides to improve it. “I will arise, and go to my father. I don’t suppose that he will take me back as his son. But I will ask him to make me as one of his hired servants. I will fall on the ground before him, and put his feet on my head. I’ll tell him, ‘Father, I’ve sinned against you and I am not worthy to be called your son any more. Just hire me as one of your servants, and treat me like one of them.’ “ Thank God, when men come to themselves!

I don’t blame the boy for thinking that he was no more worthy to be considered a son. And I would not have blamed the father had he treated the boy according to his expectations.

Not only did he deserve to be disowned but it would have also been exceedingly magnanimous of the father even to consider hiring him as a servant. It would have been extreme generosity for the father to say, “All right, boy, go into the kitchen. Do whatever the steward says, and we’ll feed you.” That boy no longer deserved any consideration. He should have been whipped. That’s what he deserved. To whip him would have been to give him his just desert. He had willfully taken what belonged to him and had deliberately thrown it away on evil men and women. He had wasted away his substance, and it was no more than right if he had to be a slave the rest of his life. That’s what he thought, and he was thinking right.

As he sat on the rail of the pen, he said that he would arise and go to his father. He was convinced that that was the thing to do. But just sitting there, and thinking about it would not have done him any good. He was far away from home in more ways than one. He was a long distance physically as well as socially and morally. That’s the same way with you, My Brother. You may sit there, and be convinced that the right thing to do, is to go to the altar, and find the Father, but, unless you leave your seat, and make your way to Him, your thinking will not do you a bit of good. Again, that young fellow might have decided to go home in a year. If he had decided to wait a whole year, in all probability, he would not have gone home at all. Today, many are

still wallowing in sin for the simple reason that, when the opportunity came to break away from it, they hesitated.

*Decide to rise, and go.* Start right away! Then you will be getting somewhere. *Step out, and make the start.* Don't be worrying about how far it is from home, and how long it will take you to get there. It's only a step at a time. The way to get home is just like the way to get away from home. It's only a step at a time. Step out, and start for the Father. And the Father will start out to meet you.

When the prodigal said, "I will arise, and go to my father." *That was good.* But, when he started going, it *was better.* He could have said, "I am not fit to go home. Father has a beautiful home. They all wear good clothes. They'd be ashamed of me the way I am. I must wait until I get a good outfit. I need a Stetson hat, a Hickey-Freeman suit and a pair of Nettleton's on my feet. Then, it wouldn't be so bad to go to father and say, "Father, I've come home dead broke, but still smiling." That's what some of you want to do. Because the devil has been whispering advice into your ears. He's told you to wait until you are fit to meet the Father. Wait until you were brushed up a bit. Wait until you got good enough. But, praise the Lord, My Brother, God can make you good. The prodigal boy did not worry about getting good clothes. He knew that his father had a whole wardrobe full for him. Hallelujah!

He went just as he was, but for the loincloth and the hog-pen stench that enveloped him, the prodigal was naked. He went singing—

*"Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, Whose Blood can cleanse each spot,  
O, Lamb of God, I come! I come!"*

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind—  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind—  
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,  
O, Lamb of God, I come! I come!"*

*Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because Thy, promise I believe,  
O, Lamb of God, I come! I come!"*

What's that house upon the hill, Come with me, Brother; the shades are up; we can look in through the window. It is dark outside; nobody will see us. Before the fireplace, we look upon a broken family circle. Here sits the father. To the right, sits the mother. Beside her, sits the oldest son. Next to him, is an empty chair. They are gathered together for family prayer, just before they retire for the night. Father opens

the family Bible; puts on his glasses; and commences to read about the great love of the Shepherd for the sheep that went astray. He looks at the mother; he looks at the oldest son; then he looks at the empty chair. His eyes begin to moisten, as he kneels down, and says, "Let us pray!" They all kneel down to pray. Listen to the old father's prayer. In a deep, tremulous voice, he implores the throne of Grace. "O God, keep my boy tonight wherever he may be. Don't let him go down any farther. O God, let him see the awfulness of living in sin. And, Lord, help him to come back home. Tell him that we love him still. Tell him that we have looked for his coming back ever since he left us. We have missed him so. Tell him that we have kept his place at the table, and his chair at the family altar remains empty. O, God, we want him to . . ." and the rest of his prayer is drowned in unutterable sorrow. At last, they rise from their knees. He goes and puts his arm about the mother who needs to be comforted.

The morning sun is coming up over the distant hill. The servants are all astir. Breakfast is almost ready. The old father is dressing beside the window. Coming down the distant hillside, he sees a staggering form. At close range, we can see that this fellow is in rags—what rags he has. His hair is matted with dirt. His face is unshaven. His feet are bruised and bleeding. He does not smell good. He reminds one of a hog pen. Oh, yes, this is the prodigal boy coming home. He did not go from home that way. Oh, no! But he's coming home that way.

The father stops dressing, and fixes his gaze upon that staggering figure. Something in him tells him that that fellow is his younger son. His eyes refuse to believe it. "Mother! Mother!" he cries; "look through the window. Is that our boy?" "That's my boy, yes! Thank God, our boy's come home." The mother heart instantly recognized him. The father rushes out of the house, and runs toward the boy. The boy sees him, and he wonders what the father will say to him. He stops, and begins to tremble. He tries to recall the little speech that he had memorized. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee . . ."

There was no need to remember more. The father had thrown his arms about his boy. The father knew what was in the boy's heart, and no talking was necessary on the part of the boy. His father was doing all the talking. "Oh, this is my son. He's come home!" And, turning to his servants who had gathered about, he ordered, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it. And let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found."

That's God! That's God! That's the way He treats the sinner who repents of his sins, and comes to ask forgiveness. Brother, Sister, what will you do tonight? Are you a prodigal, and are you going the right way. Are you going away from God, or coming back to God? What are you doing with the talent that God has given you? Are you wasting it? Are you wasting God's substance in sin and riotous living? Don't forget that, as sure as you are here tonight, the wages of sin is death. And some day, you will say that the way of the transgressor is hard. O Young Man and Young Woman, it

doesn't pay to serve the devil. *But it pays to serve Jesus.* That's true with the young people; and it is true with you who are watching the sun as it sinks in the western sky.

Evangelist Evan Roberts was conducting one of his revivals. One night, a dear, old mother came in. She told the evangelist that she had been praying for her boy and hoped that the night message would touch him. That night, the boy sat under conviction. His body was shaking. The mother turned to him, and said, "Son, come with me to the altar, and give your heart to Jesus tonight." "Not tonight, Mother," the young man, replied. "Son, better do it tonight while God is talking to your heart." "Some other night, Mother, some other night. Oh, I know God is talking to me, but some other night." Evan Roberts jumped off the platform to talk to the boy. "Come on, Son!" the evangelist urged. "Yes, Mr. Roberts, I'm coming. I've made up my mind to come. But I can't come tonight. I have a reason for putting it off." "Now is the accepted time," said the evangelist. "Today is the day of salvation." "All right!" said the young man, "I'm coming." Mother's tears and the son's tears mingled at the altar. Of course, they were tears of joy, for the boy found Jesus, and Jesus brought joy into the young man's heart.

The following day the son got up a different man—a new creature in Christ Jesus. Mother and son ate breakfast together. It was the best breakfast they had ever eaten, and the happiest breakfast they had ever spent together. Mother prepared the lunch box. She made the sandwiches and filled the thermos bottle with coffee. With a God-bless-you-and-keep-you and a kiss, she started him off to the coal mine, for he was a miner.

At five minutes to twelve every day the whistle blew, and the cage would come up the shaft with the miners. With their black hands and faces and grimy overalls they would sit in the open air to eat their lunches. But at five minutes to twelve, instead of the whistle there was a muffled explosion, and a cloud of black smoke arose from the shaft. There was a second explosion and another black cloud of smoke puffed out of the shaft. The women and children were running out of the houses. The rescue party had already donned their gas masks and oxygen tanks, and, with their first aid kits, they were awaiting the signal to go down. Doctors, nurses and everybody who knew anything about anatomy, were given an emergency call. Group by group the dead and dying were brought up. Some were cut to pieces by the coal; some burned. Others were already suffocated to death, while some were still gasping for breath. Some had been hurled against the rock by the terrific explosion, and their bodies crushed like eggshells. Mothers and wives, sisters and sweethearts and children came rushing down the hillside. They could not be kept away from the dead and injured.

At last the mother found her boy who had given his life to Jesus the night before. He lay on his back. He was bleeding from wounds in various parts of the body. He was motionless. His eyes were glassy, and they stared with a vacant stare. She mopped the blood from his head. He became somewhat revived. He looked into her eyes, and a faint smile was on his face. He thought that he was dying. He breathed

out a sentence or two. It said that he was glad mother was there to comfort him. He got her to put her face against his so he could kiss her. Then he whispered to her, as he thought he was standing at the gate of eternity, “Mother—I—am—glad—I—settled—it—last—night———— I— am—glad——I—settled—it———— —last —night.”

He wanted those words to be his dying testimony. But he did not die. The Lord raised him up, and today he is preaching, testifying to God’s saving and keeping power.

Oh, Brother, there’s coming a day when you will be glad that you have settled it, if you settle it now. May be you are not in a hog pen. May be you are in a Broadway nightclub. But you are a prodigal just the same. I plead with you, Brother, wherever you are, say to yourself, “I will arise, and go to the Father.” Will you? Yes, and do better than that by rising and going. And, while you are yet a great ways off, the Father will see you, and He will come to meet you. He will fall on your neck and kiss you and put the ring of His love on your finger and put the robe of salvation about you and He will give you the fatted calf of blessing. And there will be joy in the presence of the angels in Heaven. Will you come? Let us pray!

At the conclusion of this sermon, delivered in the Bellingham tabernacle, the altar was literally packed with young people. Tears were flowing freely and shouts of victory swept over the audience. One minister said it was the greatest sight he had ever seen. Some young men in the back of the building who had come in to disturb were broken down by conviction and confessed Christ. It was one of the great nights of a great campaign.