The Return of The Prodigal
Luke 15:11-32

Introduction:
A. This Parable is the third in a series to counter self-righteousness of the Pharisees.
   1. The Pharisees’ complaint (v. 1,2)
   2. The Lord’s response: The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.
   3. The Lord’s focus in this parable: the attitude on the older brother.
B. Our focus in this lesson is on the return of the Prodigal son, but first notice:

Discussion:
I. The Departure of the Prodigal.
   A. No reason given for the prodigal’s leaving home (vv. 12-13).
   B. Some possible reasons for leaving.
      1. Could have lost faith in his father (cf. Heb. 3:12).
      2. Could have become tired of way of life (Cf. Gal. 6:9).
      3. Could have been attracted to world (cf. 2 Tim. 4:10).
      4. Could have wanted his “freedom” (cf. 2 Pet. 2:19).
      5. Could have gotten his feelings hurt by a family member.
   C. By leaving, he left behind all the benefits and fellowship of home.
II. The Return of the Prodigal.
   A. He returned willingly (vv. 17, 18).
      1. The father was more than willing for him to come home (v. 20; cf. Rev. 3:20)
      2. The son had to come to himself and decide to return.
      3. We can and should rebuke, encourage and even beg — but prodigals must decide to do right.
   B. He returned humbly (vv. 18-21 cf. Psa. 34:18).
      1. He was in no position to demand anything.
      2. He did not try to boldly re-enter the family circle without apology.
      3. He humbly and freely confessed his sin — “I have sinned...”
         a. Reformation is not repentance — not merely quit wickedness, but repent (Acts 8:22)
         b. Returning is not confession — not merely quit sinning, but confess (1 John 2:1; Jas. 5:16)
         c. Not, “I have sinned, but ...”
   C. He returned unconditionally.
      1. He did not try to negotiate his way back in — in no position to negotiate.
      2. He did not attach any “if’s” to his offer to return.
         a. Not if father would do thus and so.
         b. Not if family (including older brother) will do thus and so.

Conclusion:
A. All prodigals must willingly, humbly and unconditionally return to the Lord.
B. All “elder brothers” must do their duty toward prodigals — but, if not, prodigal still must do his.