

The Big Question Concerning Our Problems

Sooner or later, we all make mistakes. Unfortunately, our mistakes often have dire consequences. Some people's problems are just so much greater than others. However, the big question concerning our problems is not how we got into them in the first place but how we will get out of them. Let us see how this young man got out of his dilemma.

Luke 15 (parable—episode 2)

Tension: A Jew looks after pigs!

¹⁵He went to work for someone who lived in that country, who sent him to the fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶The son wanted to fill his stomach with the food the pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything.

Relief of Tension: The prodigal son sees the light!

¹⁷Then he began to think clearly again. He said, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food! But here I am dying from hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. ¹⁹I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.'

Result: He returns to his father!

²⁰So he got up and went to his father. (NIRV)

As we mentioned yesterday, the youngest son was hit hard in the foreign country. He lost all his money (because he squandered it,) all his values (because he practiced free sex) and all his dignity (because a Jew who looked after pigs was condemned by his fellow countrymen). His urge to eat the food of pigs was lowest point to which a Jew could stoop. Furthermore, he also lost his right and claim to be acknowledged as a son.

The young man had bumped his head very hard. But there was one thing he could not lose—his father's love. This time, the young man did not long for what was in his father's hand but what was in his father's heart. The story's turning point is in verse 17, when he came to his senses. His need made him realize how stupid he had been, and his misery made him long for the abundance in his father's house. He decided to confess his sins to his father and to God.

The young man's sinful lifestyle and wrong attitude toward life landed him in big trouble. However, the most important thing to remember is not how he got into his situation but how he got out of it. Where does one start? Exactly where this young man started out. He realized that he had sinned. He did not make all kinds of excuses to justify himself or plead for leniency—just for mercy.



Lord Jesus, help me to be honest in confessing my sins to You and to others.

The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.

—Saint Augustine (354–386), *Christian theologian, rhetor, North African bishop and doctor of the Roman Catholic Church*