

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Luke 15:25-32.**
- B. The Bible says grow! We are to grow in grace and knowledge (see 2Pet. 3:18). It is sad when people do not grow as they should physically, emotionally. It is just as sad when Xians do not grow spiritually.
- C. This lesson is about those who don't want to grow. The Bible gives at least 4 examples.
- D. As we look at these let us not find ourselves. But if we do, may we be willing to change.

## I. THE OTHER SON.

- A. Scripture text: **Luke 15:25-32.**
- B. Many of us know this story very well. The younger son wasted his inheritance in a foreign land, but when he came back home the father welcomed him with open arms, threw a party, restored him back.
- C. But the older son resented the party and the rejoicing. He was jealous of the good time had by all except him.
- D. The other son had (at least) 3 problems:
  - 1. He was **jealous** (never gave me a kid to be merry with my friends).
  - 2. He was **selfish** (became angry not willing to go in).
  - 3. He was **self-righteous** (serving many years, never neglected a command).
- E. May we never make these mistakes about the growth of other Xians or the congregation in general:
  - 1. Not willing to participate (selfishness).
  - 2. Not willing to rejoice with those who rejoice (jealousy).
  - 3. Not willing to share the work load (self-righteous).
- F. The sentence which really points out the problem of the other son is that he failed to realize what had, all along (see Lk. 15:31).

## II. BUSY MARTHA.

- A. Scripture text: **Luke 10:38-42.**
- B. Martha became confused as to what was important and what wasn't.
- C. Many times when a church begins growing it is because its emphasis changes from the material or traditional to the spiritual. The problem is that some can make the change easily but some cannot.
- D. Mary made the change and did those things that were necessary, Martha rebelled at Mary's actions not knowing what was right.
- E. "We've never done that here before" or "We've done it this way for 15 years it will be good enough for another 15" are things Martha would say--not Mary.

## III. JONAH AND THE GOURD PLANT.

- A. Scripture text: **Jonah 4:5-9.**
- B. Jonah after spending time in attitude adjustment (in the great fish), he goes to Nineveh and by his preaching has 120,000 people from the king to the lowest servant in sack cloth and ashes.
- C. But this change makes Jonah as mad as he can be. And he is more concerned about a gourd plant than 120,000 people who don't know their right hand from their left.
- D. Sometimes we get more excited over TVs stereos, VCRs, cars, computers than we do the growth of the church. We get more depressed over bills to pay, our home to repair, our lack of money in the bank than we do over souls who are going straight to a devil's hell because of their sin.
- E. Jonah didn't want to grow... are you like Jonah?

## IV. THE DEAD BRANCHES.

- A. Scripture text: **John 15:1-6.**

- B. The story of the vine and the branches tells us that we must grow. There is no status quo with God. We either grow and bear fruit or we are cut off and thrown into the fire.
- C. Now the vine will bring forth branches, that is a given. We, the branches, must then decide if we are going to grow (bear fruit).
- D. If not, then we are cut off and thrown into the fire. It seems to me that growth is mandatory to go to heaven.

#### **CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. We have seen four examples of those who did not want to grow:
  - 1. The other son.
  - 2. Martha who was confused.
  - 3. Jonah and his bad attitude.
  - 4. The branch that produced no fruit.
- B. Let us resolve this day to grow.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.