

Introduction

- *Image of woman in despair over debt, kneeling surrounded by letters*
- Credit Crunch, negative equity, debt, pressures of that
 - what happens when you are in debt?
 - bankruptcy, someone else is owed, and its a problem when you don't have the wherewithall to pay back what is owed.

There was a debt

- *Image of warning triangle with "debt" in it*
- Explore what the son had done to his father, in terms of culture at the time:
 - wishing his father was dead
 - exerting independence in an age what that was anathema
 - shaming him in front of his peers
 - standing against all that his society valued
 - though he sought to take his inheritance with him, away from his father it came to nothing
- He owed his dad money, and shame.

There is a debt

- *Image of screwed up piece of paper, with "Life" written on it*
 - We are rebels
 - we have exerted our independence from our Heavenly Father
 - we have removed ourselves from our inheritance, and face a limited future
- *Romans 3:23*

There was forgiveness

- Yet there was reconciliation and forgiveness *v.22, 32*
 - the son does nothing except come
 - even his attempts to forge a relationship on the basis of servanthood are brushed aside by the father
 - the Father lifting his long cloak and running, enduring the further shame of his society - what overwhelming love!

There is forgiveness

- In Christ there is forgiveness and reconciliation
 - this is why Jesus told this parable
 - and the detail is spelled out throughout the New Testament
- *Romans 3:24*
- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

There was a decision

- To go back to the Father *v.20*
 - recognising his need for forgiveness, reconciliation, and all that goes with that

There is a decision

- What will we decide?

Conclusion

- Continually need to live in the decision to accept Christ's forgiveness
 - it is not a past-tense, one time only as we become Christians thing!
 - it is the heart of our identity
 - hence the need to pray this every week, every day...
 - to keep short accounts with God

