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Luke 15:11–32—Parable of the Prodigal Son

Jesus’s parable of the Prodigal Son provided the inspiration for at least one famous rock song of the twentieth century.

“Prodigal Son,” written by blues legend Robert Wilkins, came to the attention of millions when The Rolling Stones recorded it for their iconic album, *Beggars’ Banquet* (an album that begins somewhat ironically with “Sympathy for the Devil” but concludes with a gospel song, “Salt of the Earth,” both written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards). Wilkins himself had recorded the song in 1929; his version was called “That Ain’t No Way to Get Along” and was longer, with slightly different lyrics.¹

“Prodigal Son” by Robert Wilkins

Well a poor boy took his father’s bread
and started down the road
. . . Took all he had and started down the road
Going out in this world, where God only knows²

1. For discussion and analysis of Wilkin’s version, see David B. Gowler, *The Parables after Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1916), 213–18.

2. Lyrics as recorded by The Rolling Stones, *Beggar’s Banquet* (Decca, 1968).