

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Psalms, Proverbs & Parables
"Loved" (Luke 15:11-31)
Drue Warner
6-21-26

Parable (def): "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning"

CONTEXT: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son

- AUDIENCE: Rif-raff and Religious leaders (Pharisees)
 - Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Then Jesus told them this parable. – Luke 15:1-3

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 15:11-31 "LOVED" > The Good Father

Part 1 11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living (living prodigally).

- Divided Estate = Older son (2/3), Younger son (1/3)
- Prodigal (def): does not mean "wayward," but it means "recklessly liberal, lavishly wild." This certainly describes the younger son, but it also describes the father (after his son comes home).
 - God's reckless grace is our greatest hope, and when you experience it, it changes everything.

14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

- The severe famine was an act of God's grace, because it led to the younger son being in need. "The only thing you need to get Jesus is need." – Ray Cortese
- A young Jewish man feeding pigs and then eating the slop that the pigs were eating. What's wrong with this picture? To Jewish people, pigs were unclean! But... he was desperate. A great place to be.
- **Have you ever experienced desperation? Are you there now?** If so, you're potentially closer to experiencing the love and grace of God than you've ever been.

Part 2 17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him:

Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'

20 So **he got up and went to his father.**

- **Turning point...** When he came to his senses.
 - **What are your biggest turning points in life?** There's a good chance they were tied to being "at the end of your rope" desperate.
 - **Good sign – Humility** (I'll go back, acknowledge my sin, and offer to take the lowest position possible). **Action** (He got up and went to his father.)
 - **Pride keeps us from God** > Pharisees (the reason Jesus told this story)

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

- **His father saw him** (he had been looking for him to return), was filled with compassion (not resentment or anger, just love), he ran to his son, wrapped his arms around him and kissed him.
 - **In that culture, old Jewish men DID NOT run (especially towards a wayward, rebellious son)! But this father did.** He didn't care what anyone else thought and was willing to become "undignified." (2 Sam. 6 – David danced and sang and became undignified when the Ark of the Covenant returned to Jerusalem)
- **The son repented.** SO beautiful!
- **OBSERVATION:** The father lavished his love on his son BEFORE his son repented, not after. The father's love (recklessly liberal, lavishly wild) came first, followed by the son's repentance.

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. **Let's have a feast and celebrate.**

24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

- **GRACE** – The son was HOPING to be accepted as a slave, but the father restored him as a son, even throwing the biggest, most extravagant party he had ever thrown!
 - **The ring** = sealed and secured love.

Part 3 25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' 28 **"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.** 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. **Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I**

could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

- **JUSTICE** – The self-righteous older son wanted his younger brother to get what he deserved.
- **GRACE** – The father has grace for his oldest son, too. *“He went out to him and pleaded with him.”*
 - **Why was the older son so angry?** Because he had been obedient! He had sacrificed! He didn’t party, he didn’t go after the women, he checked all the boxes and did everything he was supposed to do.
 - **The big question is... Why?** 1) Love of his father 2) Love of himself?
- *“You never threw me a party!”*
 - **The older brother was blinded to his father’s love, because of his goodness.** “Love isn’t love until it’s not deserved.” The older brother always thought he deserved his father’s love. **He was entitled.**

31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is now found.’”

- The love of the Father is a whole different kind of love than the love that comes from us. In the face of complete and total rejection, disrespect, ingratitude, and self-righteousness, the Father pursues both of His Sons with His love.
 - *“God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.” – Luke 6*
 - I had a very small taste this past week of a similar parenting experience, and after having experienced the love and grace of God 30 years ago and walking with God for the past 30 years, I failed miserably! God showed me my heart and it was not pretty. But the Good News is that *“God knows our frame and remembers that we are but dust.” – Psalm 103:14* and He still pursues us anyway.
- There’s nothing more that our Heavenly Father loves more than lost people being found. It’s the reason Jesus came, *“To seek and to save the lost.” – Luke 19:10*

Part 4 CONCLUSION (The Third Son)

There is a third son who is not talked about in this story. Do you know who he is? He’s the one telling the story. (Credit: Tim Keller, “The Prodigal God”)

There are 2 ways to rebel against God:

- 1) Rebellion
- 2) Rule following (i.e., “You owe me.”)

Jesus is the older brother we all need. He's righteous, but He's not self-righteous. He's "gentle and humble in spirit," full of compassion, and willing to go after and pursue his lost younger brothers (both the proud and the prodigal). He was also willing to sacrifice, not his inheritance, but his life.

Juneteenth application

More than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation that ended slavery, slaves in Galveston, Texas were still living as slaves, until Union troops arrived to proclaim the good news that they had been set free. Can you imagine? Living as a slave for two years after you had been set free! It's the same with the Gospel.

2,000 years ago, Jesus secured our freedom yet many of us are still living as slaves! This is the heartbeat of "evangelism," proclaiming the Good News that *"Whom the Son sets free is free indeed."* Jesus said that He came to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and to set the oppressed free, and He invites us to share in that proclamation of Good News!

What is your primary motivation to run to the Father?

- 1) **Fear** – I better do it or else. > RELIGION (many people abandon church because they know they can't be good. Even worse, many churches are filled with people who believe they can be good (the religious, self-righteous).
- 2) **Love** – How can I not run to Him! He KNOWS that we are "but dust," and He pursues us anyway.
 - *"God's love is never stopping, never giving up, un-breaking, always and forever love."*
- Sally Lloyd-Jones

We are prodigal children in our lavishly reckless expense on ourselves, but our Heavenly Father is the Prodigal God who recklessly lavishes His love on us.

"Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou my God should die for me?"
– lyrics from the hymn, "And Can It Be That I Should Gain" by Charles Wesley (1738)

The Father's love is not conditional on the good performance of the younger son or the older son, but on the good performance of the third Son, Jesus, on behalf of both the rebellious (self-gratifying) younger son and the rule following (self-righteous) older son. When we repent of our sins and return to the Father, He will run to us, wrap His arms around us, kill the fatted calf, and throw a party celebrating our return.

That experience of the Father's love changes everything! We sang the song, *"Run to the Father,"* but the truth is... the Father is running to us.

And THAT'S Good News!