



Neither Right *nor* Left

A PARABLE FOR OUR TIMES
LUKE 15:11-32

“NEITHER RIGHT NOR LEFT—A PARABLE FOR OUR TIMES”

August 16, 2026

Luke 15:11–32 (NIV)

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. 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.

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.

“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.’

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.

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!’

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 found.’”

Notes:

“The hearts of the two brothers were the same. Both sons resented their father’s authority and sought ways of getting out from under it. They each wanted to get into a position in which they could tell the father what to do. Each one, in other words, rebelled - but one did so by being very bad and the other by being extremely good. Both were alienated from the father’s heart; both were lost sons.” — *Tim Keller, The Prodigal God*

The Movement of Grace

RELEASING - “He divided the property between them”

EXPECTING - “When he came to his senses...”

RUNNING - “But while the son was still a long way off...”

RESTORING- “Put a ring on his finger”

CELEBRATING - “So they began to celebrate”

The POWER of Grace is: UNDENIABLE.

It has the power to bring DEAD things back to LIFE.

The SCANDAL of Grace

The cost was absorbed by the one who gave it

- MISCHARACTERIZATION
- HEARTBREAK
- RESENTMENT

REVERE the father

RELATE to the father

REPRESENT the father

In this story, Jesus is the father.