

## Who is the Prodigal?

## Luke 15

Hundreds of MILLIONS of Followers of JESUS CHRIST in World Today  
 BILLIONS who are NOT YET Following – HOW do we INVITE Them?  
 SOME – Make it EASY, EXCITING, BENEFICIAL, Promise Health & Wealth  
 JESUS – In Luke – EXCITING, HARD, DIFFICULT, LIFE-THREATENING  
 End Ch 14 – TRIPLE Loaded CANON – Fired, Warning Shot to Large Crowds  
 Do Not – HATE Family / Give Up Own Life – CANNOT be My Disciple 3 X's  
 Last words Ch 14: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Luke 14.35  
 Apparently MANY DID HEAR with God-Given EARS and they Liked It  
 OPEN Ch 15 > LARGE CROWDS, MANY MORE NOW FOLLOWING

vs. 1,2 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

IRONIC – Religious LEADERS Not Happy about all WRONG Kind of People  
 People see Jesus is AUTHENTIC – CARING – OPEN to them Coming to HIM

To invite a man to a meal was an offer of peace, trust, brotherhood, and forgiveness; in short, sharing a table meant sharing a life. Joachim Jeremias

3 CONNECTED Stories > Jesus' Thoughtful REPLY to MUTTERING Leaders  
 3 Things LOST – Sheep, Savings, Son > ALL FOUND leading to GREAT JOY  
 Most FAMILIAR Story > FATHER 2 Sons – COMPARE & CONTRAST

Jesus > All we ever THOUGHT about HOW to Meet God –  
 Anywhere, Anytime, Any Place – IS WRONG

### 1. The Sinful Son

PRODIGAL Son > Excessive, Extravagant, Wasteful, Over the Top

a. Rebellion v. 12 The younger (son) said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

JUDAISM had CLEAR Instruction about this VERY SITUATION  
To son or wife, to brother or friend, give no power over yourself while you live;  
and give not your goods to another to have to ask for them again. Sirach 33.19-23

ROMAN World > FATHER held Power of LIFE & DEATH over SON  
NO Son with ANY BRAINS would DARE make such RUDE REQUEST

DIVIDED his BIOS = LIFE / Life of People was their LAND / PROPERTY  
STANDING in Community tied to HOW MUCH Land YOU OWNED

Younger Son “Tear Your Life APART – Standing, Security, and Sustenance”

DEUT 21: ELDEST – Got 2/3 of INHERITANCE / YOUNGEST got 1/3  
Youngest Son “I want your STUFF, BUT I do NOT want YOU! – DIE Now!”

Trad. Near Eastern Father > DRIVE son Away with BLOWS – Verbal, Physical

TYPICAL AMERICAN - "I want it, and I want it now"

"FATHER, I WANT TO SEE YOU DEAD!!" // Get out of my life

MANY HAVE SAID THE SAME THING TO GOD

We're ALL the SAME - MANY DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS of REBELLION

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way Isaiah 53:6

v. 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.

AS FAR AWAY FROM HOME AS POSSIBLE  
DISGRACED HIS FAMILY : Eating, Drinking, Women, and FAST CAMELS

An evil man is bent only on rebellion

Proverbs 17:11

b. Repulsiveness

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

JEWISH SAYING "May a curse come upon the man who cares for swine"

### HUNGER AND HUMILIATION

the pleasures of sin (last) for a short time. Hebrews 11:25

TWO SIMULTANEOUS DISASTERS - 1) Out of money 2) Famine

LOTS of Money > LOTS of FRIENDS / Friends LEFT when MONEY DID

the way of the unfaithful is hard. Proverbs 13:15

Boom times never last, dreams fade, friends desert and people discover for themselves the painful realities of a fallen world. Douglas Milne

"Sins you do 2 by 2, you must pay for 1 by 1" Rudyard Kipling

c. Realization v. 17 "When he came to his senses, he said, How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!"

### HARDSHIP HAS A POWERFUL WAY OF MAKING PEOPLE THINK

RESPONSIVENESS of UGANDANS TO GOSPEL - Civil war, suffering, AIDS

Global ECONOMIC Collapse > Best thing for Some People's SOULS

Sin has DE-CENTERED Us from God > We need to Go Back to His HOME

He was truly lost and it was this complete lostness that brought him to his senses. He was shocked to the awareness of his utter alienation and suddenly understood that he had embarked on the road to death...He knew that one more step in the direction he was going would take him to self-destruction. Henri J.M. Nouwen  
d. Repentance > Religious word for TURNING AROUND – a 180!

v. 18,19 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'

KNEW His Sin was MULTI-DIMENSIONAL – Against God and Man and Self  
SIN IS ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD - PRIMARY OFFENSE

ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

Jesus: "...unless you repent, you too will all perish." Luke 13:5

TURNED AROUND but TRUSTED HIMSELF and his OWN PLAN

HE would WORK – He would EARN his Living – BEST he could EXPECT

He would GET JOB – RESTORE Money > Missed MAIN POINT

PROBLEM is PRIMARILY a BROKEN RELATIONSHIP

e. Reconciliation

Jewish Community – KEZAZAH Ceremony (Cutting Off Ceremony)

Jewish Son who lost his INHERITANCE among Gentiles

Could expect to be Cut-Off by ENTIRE VILLAGE if Dared Return Home

Earthen Pot filled with Burned Corn & Nuts placed BEFORE & Broken

You are Cut-Off from your People – Have Nothing to DO with You

vs. 20,21 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. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

"the father ran" - SHOCKING FOR ELDERLY PALESTINIAN MAN

KIDS Run – WOMEN Run – MEN do NOT – esp. IMPORTANT Men

NO SCOLDING - NO "I TOLD YOU SO"

NOT RESTITUTION > become CRAFTSMAN, learn TRADE, REPAY DEBT

RUN > Pick up Robes > BARED his LEGS > SHOCK of Grown, Man Running

BEST Robe > FATHER'S Son > Given by MERCY not by MERIT

The rabbis agreed that God would welcome the penitent sinner. But it is a new idea that God is a seeking God, a God who takes the initiative. Leon Morris

RAN to Stop the KEZAZAH Cutting Off Ceremony > NOT for His SON!

v. 2 "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

LOST SON – All who HEARD Jesus – NEVER IMAGINED Such a Father

No Concept of TOTAL, ABSOLUTE, UNCONDITIONAL Forgiveness

To have COMPLETED Speech about Work would be to Doubt Father's Grace

LOVE OF GOD - HEART OF GOSPEL - CROSS REVEALED LATER  
TURNING ENEMIES into FRIENDS - REBELS into BELOVED CHILDREN

MAN "Everytime my wife and I argue she gets HISTORICAL"

You must mean HYSTERICAL

NO, she drags up everything from the past and holds it against me

GOD FORGETS ALL our SINS - THROWS THEM to DEPTHS of the SEA

Cory ten Boom > PUTS UP A SIGN SAYING "NO FISHING"

Jesus is showing us the God of Great Expenditure, who is nothing if not prodigal toward us, his children. Tim Keller

GOD is the PRODIGAL > GRACE is Reckless, Unlimited, Excessive

Charles Spurgeon > 7 Point Sermon Father Kissing His Lost Son

Much Love – Much Forgiveness – Full Restoration – Exceeding Joy –

Overflowing Comfort – Strong Assurance of Salvation – Intimate Communion

f. Restoration

vs. 22-24 "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. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

ROBE = POSITION

RING = AUTHORITY (Signet)

SHOES = FREEMAN

CALF = VERY SPECIAL OCCASION

### FULFILLS THE PROMISE OF MOSES

Moses: "...when you and your children return to the LORD our God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul...then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you" Deuteronomy 30:2,3

Bayview Glen Church in Toronto, Canada – Pastor Sam Nasser DISTURBED  
 Preaching to his IRANIAN Congregation in PERSIAN – Woman on Cell Phone  
 Thought perhaps EMERGENCY – Let it Slide – Until SAME Thing Next Week  
 Began to REBUKE Her > Explained Husband in Iran Listening, Speaker in Rm  
 Had Woman move to Front > More Clear Phone Message Toronto to Iran  
 End Service asked for Prayer to Receive Christ > Woman Shouted  
 My Husband just Got Saved – Now My Mother and Sister want to Pray Too!

What LENGTHS God will GO to FIND Us!

## 2. The Smug Son

THE OLDER BROTHER STOOD WATCHING FROM THE FIELD

JESUS HOLDS a MIRROR UP to PHARISEES and TEACHERS of the LAW

THEY REFUSE TO REJOICE OVER CHRIST'S MINISTRY TO SINNERS

v. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

GREAT SUMMARY Statement of GOSPEL – Marvelous Love of God  
 Word Inscribed on Tombstone: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Jewish Religious LEADERS Simple View of WORLD

WHOLE World – Divide into 2 – JEW and GENTILE

JEWS – Chosen People of God: Covenant, Law, Priesthood, Messianic Kingdom

GENTILES – Words of 1 Rabbi – Created for FUEL for FIRES of HELL

Take ALL JEWS > Divide into 2 Groups

1. Law Keeping – Kosher – Ceremonially Clean > BLESSED by God
2. LOST – Jewish Blood but NOT Jewish BEHAVIOR – NOT Good Enough

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' Luke 18.11,12

SENSELESS = BLIND TO HIS OWN

a. Blind to Sinfulness

Father comes OUT for SMUG Son just like he did for the SINFUL Son

He was a 'good man' in the worst sense of the word. Mark Twain

v. 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.

OLDER Brother > BIG Concern is CALF! MEAT was RARE, DELICACY

MOST EXPENSIVE meat would be FATTENED CALF

How DARE you! NOW Father is SPENDING HIS Money!

Will NOT ENTER Father's Greatest PARTY ever HELD!

Father to OLDER Son > "My CHILD..!" Wants him to ENTER the Party

REACTS WITH ANGER - FATHER GOES OUT TO HIM TOO

"Slaving" DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT BEING A SON WAS  
GROUCHY SPIRIT - NO WONDER HE WAS UNHAPPY

Very RUDE and DISRESPECTFUL to FATHER > LOOK! – not even DAD

"I never disobeyed" PROUD AND SELF RIGHTEOUS

"you never gave me" GREEDY

"Everything I have is yours" HIS 2/3 OF THE INHERITANCE

The proud and self-righteous always feel they are not treated as well as they deserve.

Leon Morris

WE CANNOT SEE OUR SIN

Woman's HUSBAND - Came HOME DRUNK EVERY NIGHT - SNORED

"Doctor, He snores so loud I can't sleep, What can I do?"

TIE A RIBBON AROUND HIS NOSE

Came HOME DRUNK - FELL into BED FULLY CLOTHED – Began SNORE

She found a blue ribbon in dresser and tied it on his nose

MORNING - WIFE SAYS "where were YOU??"

HE LOOKS IN MIRROR "I don't know but wherever I was, I won first prize"

The Father in heaven has no righteous children on earth; His grace is needed for all, and most of all for those who dream they have no need of it. B.B. Warfield

### b. Blind to Grace

vs. 30-32 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" "My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 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.'"

TERM OF CONTEMPT "this son of yours" NOT MY BROTHER



ACCUSATION / EXAGGERATION?? "prostitutes" TEXT NEVER SAYS

REASON FOR ANGER??

FATHER says "BROTHER of YOURS" - NO BETTER or WORSE than YOU

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:4

ONLY SEE THEMSELVES - BLIND TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

Titus 3:5

How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? Hebrews 2:3

THEREFORE HE CANNOT REJOICE - NO JOY IN THE LORD

LOGICAL Approach to 3 Stories –

Have 100 Sheep – 1 Lost > Go FIND it to RESTORE the Fold

Jesus > Searching WOMAN is Picture of GOD > Good News for ALL People

Have 10 Coins (Day's Wages) – 1 Lost > Search HOUSE and FIND

Find Sheep 1/100 of you Flock – Find Coin 1/10 of you Savings

Would you IGNORE Son – ½ of Family, Future, Destiny

Look for Stupid Sheep – Small Coin – IGNORE own Son in God's Image?

ILLOGICAL Approach to 3 Stories –

99 Sheep – Safe & Secure – Risk it ALL of ONE that is LOST?

LOOSE a Day's Work, or More, Search for COIN worth Day's Labor?

Run after Stubborn Son – He can Run Faster – Does not WANT to be Home!

Either the shepherd is foolish or the shepherd loves the lost sheep and will risk everything, including his own life, until he finds it.

Fred Craddock

c. Blind to Joy RESTORING Younger Brother would COST the ELDER

vs. 25-28 When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing...(he) became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

"There is joy before God when those who provoke him perish from the world"  
Jewish Saying

JESUS v. 10 there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

GOD HIMSELF IS REJOICING > Angels in His Presence

SPEAKING OF THE SINFUL WOMAN, JESUS SAID

her many sins have been forgiven- -for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Luke 7:47

Restore to me the joy of your salvation

Psalm 51:12

SMUG Son did not HAVE such JOY > REFUSED to REJOICE

STAYED OUTSIDE and MUTTERED with his Friends the Pharisees

The son who was out of the house is now very much in, while the older son sits on the outside. Darrell Bock

It is not his badness keeping him out, but his goodness. It is not his sins that are keeping him from sharing the feast...so much as his righteousness. The elder brother in the end is not lost despite of his good record, but because of it.

Tim Keller

THIRD SON - THE ONE TELLING THE PARABLE

### 3. The Seeking, Saving Son

REDEFINES GOD

Idea of GOD as FATHER very RARE in OT > Jesus primary REF to God  
 Father UNLIKE any other > Runs after Lost Children > Passionate > Tender

ISSUE - Jesus made friends with the wrong kind of people

"tax collectors and sinners"

TO ASSOCIATE WITH THEM WAS CONTAMINATING  
 TO EAT WITH THEM WAS OUTRAGEOUS "this man!!"

SOME RABBI'S TAUGHT "God would welcome a penitent sinner"

UNHEARD OF - GOD SEEKS AFTER SINNERS

GOD LAYS HIS LIFE DOWN FOR THEM

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into  
 the world to save sinners  
 1 Timothy 1:15

2 Basic Ways People try to Meet God

**1. Moral Conformity** – I will OBEY and PROVE MY WORTH

**2. Self Discovery** – I decide what is RIGHT, what I NEED

ELDER Brothers divide World into 2 – Good People In, Bad People Out

YOUNGER Brothers do the Same – OPEN Minded In, CLOSED Minded Out

NEITHER – HUMBLE are in and PROUD are OUT --- HONEST about Failure

BOTH try to be OWN SAVIOR – Control Father being BAD, other by GOOD

RELIGIOUS People obey GOD to get THINGS

GOSPEL People obey GOD to get GOD

BITTER, ANGER of ELDER is EVIDENT even in his GOODNESS

HOW to MEET God

Many HISTORIANS say XIANITY is NOT a RELIGION > Too Different

MORAL CONFORMITY and SELF DISCOVERY ARE NOT ENOUGH

HIDDEN Root of BOTH is SELF > I WILL DO what I NEED for my SOUL

TWO RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD > what I DO, what GOD does

Chapter 15 > What God Does – 3 Lost Things – Cannot FIND Themselves

We Need

a. Sought by God – TRUE Elder Brother > Search for Lost, Younger Brother

LOVING FATHER > He seeks BOTH Sons

KISS of YOUNGER SON by Father prompts the REPENTANCE

PLEA of Father to ELDER Brother COME IN!

We are ALL WRONG! But God RUNS after us and says I LOVE YOU!

"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." 1 John 4.19

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10

GOES out to SINNER - BEFRIENDS THEM

v. 4 Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

The third parable would likely be misunderstood without the first and second. We have sometimes heard it said – here is the prodigal received as soon as he comes back, no mention being made of a Savior who seeks and saves him. Is it possible to teach all truths in one single parable?...If you put the three pictures in line, they represent the whole compass of salvation...yet each one is distinct from the other, and by itself instructive. Charles Spurgeon

b. Turning to God > More than REPENTING of LIST OF SINS

Traditional Repentance of Younger Son > CONFESSION List

Diff between Christian and Moralist / Christians REPENT for what did RIGHT >

Even BEST PRAYERS could Send to HELL

Even our DESIRE to SERVE God is sometimes desire to CONTROL GOD

SEE What it COST God to BRING US Home

WORLD says Problem of World is RELIGION – Jesus says you are RIGHT!

TRADITIONAL MORALITY, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS does not SAVE

Jesus > SELF-DISCOVERY is not Working EITHER > Has not Taken us to God

vs. 31,32 " 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 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.' "

Last Verse > Everything I have is YOURS – Robe, Ring, Calf, Sandals

MANY FOOLS Refuse to Come to God because they think They'll Miss  
Something – Some Pleasure, Possession, or Purchase in Life

END – Without God they LOOSE Everything / Those who Come get ALL

c. Found by God vs. 4, 8 MORE THAN TOKEN SEARCH "until he finds it"

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 10:11

FULFILLS THE PROMISE THROUGH EZEKIEL

I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign  
LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays Ezekiel 34:15,16

RESCUE Set into MOTION in Garden of EDEN / PLANNED from ETERNITY

Jesus shows BAD ELDER brother so we would want GOOD ONE

Jesus stripped NAKED so we could be CLOTHED

Called from CROSS – My God why Forsaken? Forsaken as Son – So we could  
become CHILDREN OF GOD!

Mid July > Attention of World Focused > SOUTH AFRICA

2 Nations will Hold their Breath as Football Teams play for WORLD CUP  
CELEBRATION of Victors will LAST for WEEKS

you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy  
1 Peter 1:8

TEMPORAL Joy > FAINT Reflection of ENDLESS Celebration of Salvation

CREATOR GOD DIES FOR REBELLIOUS CREATURES

THEN REJOICES OVER THEIR REPENTANCE

Luke 15

1. Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.
2. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3. Then Jesus told them this parable:

4. "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

5. And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

6. and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

7. I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

8. "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

9. And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'

10. In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

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 men 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 men.'

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.'"