

HOMECOMING

Luke 15:11-32

Context

“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.” (15:1-2)

Two lost sons

- Tax collectors and sinners – **younger son**
- Pharisees and teachers of the law – **older son**

Timothy Keller:
(The Prodigal God)

Jesus's teaching consistently attracted the irreligious while offending the Bible-believing, religious people of his day.

However, in the main, our churches today do not have this effect. The kind of outsiders Jesus attracted are not attracted to contemporary churches, even our avant-garde ones.

**We tend to draw conservative,
buttoned-down, moralistic people. The
licentious and liberated or the broken
and marginal avoid church...**

If our churches aren't appealing to younger brothers, they must be more full of elder brothers than we'd like to think.

The Lost Younger Son

“The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’” (15:12)

– Essentially, the younger son wants the wealth of his father, but not the father.

**Do we leave the home of our
heavenly Father?**

Henri Nouwen:

(The Return of the Prodigal Son)

I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love where it cannot be found.

Why do I keep ignoring the place of true love and persist in looking for it elsewhere? Why do I keep leaving home where I am called a child of God, the Beloved of my Father?

I am constantly surprised at how I keep taking the gifts God has given me – my health, my intellectual and emotional gifts – and keep using them to impress people, receive affirmation and praise, and compete for rewards, instead of developing them for the glory of God.

Yes, I often carry them off to a “distant country” and put them in the service of an exploiting world that does not know their true value.

It's almost as if I want to prove to myself and to my world that I do not need God's love, that I can make a life on my own, that I want to be fully independent.

The Father's response to the younger son

“So he divided his property between them.”
(15:12)

– What the younger son did cause his father to suffer a tremendous loss of honor in his community as well as the pain of rejected love.

Return of the younger son

“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 servants.”

(15:18-19)

“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.’ “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.’**” (15:20-23)

extravagant love and amazing grace

- **“free for all” and “free in all to whom it is given.”** (John Wesley)
- **“costly because it cost God the life of his Son.”** (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

The Lost Older Son

‘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. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ (15:29-30)

Both sons were lost

It was the wealth, not the love of the father, that they believed would make them happy and satisfied.

Traits of the two son?

- Younger Son – **always looking for love, satisfaction and significance in the wrong places.**
- Older Son – **superiority and resentment.**

Two Ways of Finding satisfaction

“One strategy was to be very, very bad; the other was to be very, very good.” (Timothy Keller)

– Whether is it through self-indulgence or self-righteousness, both are seeking to be your own Savior and Lord.

Third way

Through Jesus

**– to live our lives on His salvation
(Jesus is everything you need)**

“If our churches aren’t appealing to younger brothers, they must be more full of elder brothers than we’d like to think.” (Timothy Keller)

- *I like Jesus but not the church.*
- *I love Jesus but I hate religion.*