

LOST AND FOUND

The Lost Boy's Pt. 4 / 11.19.22

I. INTRODUCTION (Luke 15:25-32)

- A. In the past couple of weeks, we've spent our time looking at Jesus' parable, not of one son, but of two sons, and a father. One younger son, who wasted his father's wealth on parodical living, reached the bottom, woke up, and in repentance, made his way back home.
- B. We looked at the father's lavish love on the younger sons return. We talked about how the father lovingly embraced the younger son, in such a broken, dirty, and dejected state.
- C. But tonight, we will now shift our focus for this final message from **Luke 15** to look at the older brother, the other son in the story. We will learn tonight that it wasn't one son who was lost, but two sons who are lost. One away from the father's house, and one inside/around the father's house.

II. (Luke 15:25-32)

- A. **Luke 15:25-27** *"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, You brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf."*
 - 1. All throughout this story that Jesus is telling, the Pharisee's and Scribes (*the ones Jesus is talking to*) have struggled to find someone that they can identify with, someone they resemble, but now they hear about their guy.
 - 2. The older son is their example. In their eyes the younger son is a loser, wasting his life. The father whom they hoped would act in a way to defend his honor, does what's shameful in their eyes by embracing the younger son, give him a shameful reception.
 - 3. But now they have someone they can relate to. One who never ran off. One who didn't waste the father's inheritance. One who didn't spend his livelihood in excess and waste. One who worked hard, was at the same place every day, and acted in a publicly honorable way.
 - 4. Well, where is he? *"...his older son was in the field..."* The younger son ran off into a FAR AWAY COUNTRY, and the older son ran into a FAR AWAY FIELD. For the sake of Jesus' metaphor, both are far from the father.
 - B. But, *"...as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant..."* Look, at a festive occasion like this, why is the older brother still out in the field? Why is he working while the father is celebrating?
 - 1. It's clear their estate is big enough, that you can throw a party, maybe including a couple hundred people, with live music, dancing, and the older brother wouldn't hear it, until he draws closer.
 - 2. A party this size wouldn't be planned in day, it would be planned over weeks, maybe months. And it surely wouldn't happen without the older brother knowing about it, this is now his estate, he's received 2/3rd's of it from the father.
 - 3. Why is the older brother unaware of what's happening? It's because he doesn't love the father, or his younger brother. The older son's relationship with the father is equally as broken as it was with the younger son.
 - C. With great suspicion, *"...he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf."*
-

1. The older brother is so unaware of what's happening that he has to ask one of the servants. But notice he doesn't ask his father. A normal older son would bust into the door, asking the father, "*Daddy, what's going on? Did I miss the memo?*"
 2. It's as if the servant responds by saying, "*His heart is so changed, on my gosh, what your father has longed for. You know, you saw your dad sitting out on the porch every day, waiting, hoping, and longing for him to come home. And he came back in such a repentant way, he's been restored to the family, he's a son again, with all the vested authority he left with. Your brother is home, he's safe and sound.*"
 - a. This phrase safe and sound, means, "*He's healthy, he's doing well, not just physically, but spiritually, morally. The idea is shalom, it's the wholeness of reconciliation between the father and the son.*"
 3. Well, this is the older brother's worst fear.
- D. Luke 15:28** *"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and pleaded with him."*
1. Who was angry? Who was unwilling to come in? It's the older brother, the one who's supposed to be the leader, the one who's supposed to be the example, the one who is supposed to be leading the way for the family.
 2. The older brother most likely has hidden his hatred in the past, he most likely had the community fooled, but now he has a public display of private hatred.
 - a. He has no love for the father. He has no love for his brother. He's angry that the father is lavishing love on an unloving person. He's a religious hypocrite.
 1. **Matthew 23:25** *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."*
 2. It's as if the Pharisees and Scribes words are in the mouth of the older brother saying, "*This father of mine is now running publicly, exposing his legs, this nobleman is now shamelessly running out to meet this sinner! And not only meeting him, but giving him a welcome of a son returning home from war? Does he know what this boy did to him? How he wasted your livelihood? He's now eating, and receiving his sinful, dirty, gross young son back into his care? Has he not learned his lesson?"*
 3. When the father hears that his oldest boy won't come in, he then goes to him. Why? Because God is a God *who seeks to save that which is lost*. The father who's neck deep in celebration, filled with joy over the recovery of his lost/dead son, now has to step away from the joy of his heart, to appeal for his older son to come in, to celebrate with them.
 4. The love of the father is seen in him going out to meet his sons, not once, but twice. Once for the wayward son, and now a second time for the religious hypocrite. This isn't just an ask, it's an *appeal*.
 - a. Beloved, as the father is doing this in the story, so also is Jesus doing it with the Pharisee's and Scribes. Jesus is right there, appealing with them to turn their hearts, to change their minds, to see things differently. Come in, celebrate the tax collectors, the sinners, the broken and hurting that are coming to Me.
 - b. This was the acceptable year of our Lord. A time, when God was overlooking trespasses, as long as there was true repentance, a true turning of the heart away from sin and self, and to towards the Savior. But beloved, it's still the acceptable year of our Lord! Now is an acceptable time to come to Him, to put faith in Him to put confidence in Him.
-

5. But even if the Pharisees and Scribes found their guy in the older brother, they are totally thrown off by his refusal to come in. This would've been beyond what a father would do towards an angry, disobedient son. Instead of slapping the older son, he comes alongside him, pleading with him (the Paraclete).
 - a. This is what God the Father does for both the wayward, and the religious hypocrite. He appeals that they also come in, repent, join in on the celebration, join the feast of God.
 - E. **Luke 15:29-30** "So he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him."
 1. Here's where we learn, that although the older brother was living on the estate, his heart was somewhere else. The years of work, his desire to cross the t's and dot the I's have led him into a life separated from the father. He doesn't just have one issue, he has lenty of items, no short list, but a laundry list he's kept inside.
 2. The New King James uses the phrase, "...I have been serving you..." but the Greek word there is slave. The idea is that, "he's been slaving for the father all these years." The older brother sees the work that he's been doing on the family estate as slaving.
 3. He hasn't been working WITH the father, he's been working FOR the father. He hasn't done this for the joy of the father, there's no sense of appreciation for the portion of land he's received, this isn't an investment into his future, into his property, it's just cold, hard, distant, servitude.
 4. He's not learned what it meant to be a son, to be enjoyed for who he was, not just for what he did.
 5. And wow, does he have sharp accusations of the father, "...I NEVER transgressed your commandment...you NEVER gave me a young goat..."
 - a. It's true, the prideful and self-righteous always feel like they aren't being treated as they deserve. They have a sense of entitlement, that they should be given more, treated better, served more. This is where the older brother is. Mad he's not getting a fair shake.
 6. Beloved, this is the worst type of lostness, being lost it's being lost within the house, around the house. Being around the stuff, but the stuff never transforms our hearts, it never changes our lives.
 - a. **2nd Timothy 3:5** "Having a form of godliness but denying it's power..."
 - b. **Matthew 15:14** "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, bot will fall into a ditch."
 - c. **Matthew 23:14** "But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."
 - d. **Matthew 5:20** "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."
 7. Keith Green in his song "Asleep In The Light" said it this way, "How can you be so dead, when you've been so well fed...Jesus rose from the grave, and you (we), can't even get out of bed."
 - F. Look at the older sons continued accusation, "But as soon as this SON OF YOURS came, who has devoured YOUR livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him." I mean wow, he can't even refer to him as his brother, it's "THIS SON OF YOURS." And it wasn't his money he wasted, it was, "YOUR LIVELIHOOD."
-

1. This is the 28,000 ft Mt. Everest climax of the son's accusation when he says, "...you killed the fatted calf for him." Previously he said, "You never even killed a young goat for me and my friends." A young goat was way cheaper than the fatted calf.
 - a. This was his way of saying, "You wouldn't even roast a young goat for me and my commandment keeping friends, but this son of yours, who's spent, not all of his money, but YOUR money has now come home, and you kill the fatted calf? The kid goat is so cheap, and you won't spend that on me, when I've been keeping all the rules, but THIS SON OF YOURS COMES HOME, and you slay the most expensive animal we have? Really?"
 - b. "Let the father welcome him home if he wants, but he's dead to me. I will never be connected to that type of sinner, that type of rebellious, rule breaking, prodigal living person. You might be our father's son, but you're not my brother. While you were out chasing the wind, I was here working, living my life, putting in my time day in and day out, so that I could rightfully earn what's mine. But you on the other hand, you took some of this generational wealth, and ran up your bill with prostitutes, and disgusting living. While I on the other hand, keep all the family rules, abided by all the terms and conditions. I was a perfect son, a well deserving son, a son who wasn't taking a handout in life, I earned my keep, unlike him."
 2. This is why there's not verse where the older brother is contending for the father's honor. This is why there's no verse where the older brother rebukes the younger brother for the way he's speaking to the father.
 - a. It's because the older son doesn't love his dad either or his brother.
- G. **Luke 15:31-32** "And he said to him, son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."
1. What a tender, loving response from the father. "Son, your always with me, both in heart and in presence. You live here, you're in my house, you're near me, your with me, my heart is always open to you, and in fact, everything here on this estate is yours, I've already given it to you."
 2. But the father is also unwilling to apologize for his behavior. He's a true father, loving his wayward son, and reaching out to his rebellious son at the same time. The father correctly says, "It's right that we should make merry and be glad, FOR YOUR BROTHER was dead, and is alive again..."
 3. The word RIGHT, literally means, *it's essential, it's a necessity, a divine necessity.*
 - a. God requires that His family rejoice that salvation is coming to the outcasts.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Some ask, how did the older brother respond. We don't know, because Jesus didn't want us to know. The older brother is a fictional person, who ceased to exist after **Luke 15:32**.
- B. We can for sure ask the question, how did the Pharisees and Scribes respond? We don't know about this specific teaching, but overall, it wasn't good. Their response, the religious leaders of Jesus day, responded negatively, with anger, eventually killing Christ.
- C. I got three takeaways for us:

1. It's easy to decide who's in and who's out—Beloved, it's so easy for us to assume who's in the kingdom and who's outside the kingdom. Who's going to get God's affection through us, and who isn't. This is what religion does, it chooses ahead of time, upon seeing people, upon hearing about people, who's going to be in and who's going to be out.
 - a. The Pharisees had a theological worldview that said, "God's laws are a burden (even though the Bible calls them a delight)." They believed that those that follow God should be burdened down with the Law of God. They couldn't understand how someone in this position, like a sinner or a tax collector could simply receive forgiveness and not also take on these extra burdens like them.
2. We don't associate with certain people because we are afraid we might end up living our life like them—Think of the many things that we steer clear from. I couldn't reach out to this person because of the way they believe politically. I couldn't hang out with this person because they have a criminal record. I couldn't reach out to this person because they make way too much money.
3. We assume our own personal righteousness comes from being separated from unholy, or unclean things—Yes, it's true, as a follower of Jesus, we are called to a life of purity, but that's not a life of separation from people, from others. This is what Paul said in **1st Corinthians 5**.
 - a. Beloved, we are made pure through the shed blood of Jesus, through the imputing of His righteousness by faith, through grace. It's something given us. And it's powerful enough to keep us, as we live our lives among those that are far from God.