

# LOST AND FOUND

## The Lost Boy's Pt. 2 / 11.5.22

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### I. INTRODUCTION (Luke 15:17-21)

- A. For the last three weeks we've been spending time looking at three of Jesus' parables in **Luke 15**. First we looked at the story of the Shepherd and the lost sheep. Then we looked at the women, and the lost coin. And last week, we started the story of two sons, one younger and one older, and the father.
- B. It's important that we keep in context who Jesus is talking to; the Pharisee's and the Scribes.
  - 1. As Jesus told the story of the younger son, there were three gasps from the Pharisee's and Scribes;
    - a. *Give me my portion of goods | He wasted his possessions in gentile land | Attached to a gentile and feeding swine*

### II. A LONG JOURNEY HOME (Luke 15:17-21)

- A. **Luke 15:17** "But when he came to himself, he said, how many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"
  - 1. The younger son has reached the preverbal bottom. He's there, at rock bottom. The younger son's been broken, he's been stripped, he's been reduced, so much so he was fighting/desiring for the pig slop, and couldn't even get that.
  - 2. But it's here, through the father releasing the son, that he's coming to his bottom. He's reached the end of himself, and finally realizing he needs something outside himself.
    - a. Beloved, this is why God has made the human body to need things outside of itself. Our bodies can't be sustained on their own forever (*3 days without water, 40 days without food*). We require something outside of ourselves in order to live, and it's God-ordained. *We are dependent people.*
  - 3. But how did "...HE COME TO HIMSELF...?" Does he do this on his own? Does a person like the younger son, caught up in such sinful activity, in a slumber so deep that no alarm clocks can arouse him, just suddenly, on his own, COME TO HIMSELF? Never. This is a slumber only God can awake!
    - a. **Matthew 16:13-17**—*Jesus was clear, flesh and blood didn't reveal this to Peter.*
  - 4. See, although this young man had left his father, as we will see in a moment, his father never left him. Just because God handed the younger son over to himself, it doesn't mean that God had abandoned him.
    - a. Friends, how many of you parents, how many of you have loved ones that you are praying for? Be of good cheer, God is able to reach behind the closed, locked and boarded up doors of our loved ones hearts.
    - b. We are often so focused on the closed doors, that we forget about the God who opens up shut doors.
  - 5. Well, this is what pressure does. This is what desperate situations do. They either break a person and lead them to repentance, or further harden the heart.
  - 6. Look at what he now says, "...how many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." For the first time the son is now thinking about his father. He's done everything in his power to forget about his father, to live away from his father, to be outside the rule of his father, but now he's remembering.
  - 7. A hired servant was basically a day laborer who had no influence over his wages. They were subject to the whoever hired them. These were among the lowest on the working-class totem pole. Not bad people, just no ongoing employment, no advocate, no insurance, never knowing what job was next.

8. And as he thinks about these HIRED SERVANTS what does he consider? He remembers that not only did these day laborer's have enough, they actually had more than enough, "...they...(had) bread enough to spare..."
    - a. The son is remembering, not the day laborers, but his father, his father's generosity. His father cared above and beyond for the needs of the lowest working-class people, the hired servants. If he takes care of them, what does this say about him?
  - B. **Luke 15:18-19** "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, father I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."
    1. This is a soliloquy, it's an out loud monologue that the younger son is having with himself. He's considering his ways, his situation and what to do to rectify it. How can the wrongs of his life be forgiven!
    2. Well, it's clear from his words that he's sinned against his father, he's sinned against his family, he's sinned against his older brother, but before all of these things, the younger son is clear, "...father I have sinned against heaven (God) and before you..."
      - a. These words are reminiscent of David's words in **Psalm 51:4** after his adulterous affair and the killing of Uriah. **Psalm 51:4**, "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight..."
      - b. The language Jesus uses here seems to be taken from **Ezra 9:6**, "And I said, O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens."
      - c. Friends, it's impossible for God to awaken a person to His grace and salvation without at the same time convicting them of their sin. This is how it happens. He awakens us to salvation, and we realize we are sinners, we have sinned, we are separated, not just from our family, or our city, but from God.
    3. So, maybe not every person lives this way, maybe not every person, even those listening now haven't sinned in this same way, but the question we all want to know is, how will the father accept a person who's sinned this bad? How will God react to someone this terrible? Because it sets a pattern for what God will do with us.
    4. We know the younger son is repentant because of this phrase, "...I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." This is salvation without conditions. He's got no thinking that he's going to be able to return to the house as a son. In his mind, he's returning at the bottom, like a day laborer. He's blown it, and he's going to have to pay restitution to get restored.
    5. It's at this point that the Pharisee's and Scribes would've celebrated the sons thinking. "Yep, *that's right boy, you're thinking rightly. You come back, you grovel, you crawl back to your father and just maybe you'll get an invitation to return back among the family as a day laborer. And if you make enough money, if you work hard enough, you might be able to pay your restitution and get reinstated back among the family, but that's up for debate. Right now, pay your dues, do your work, and earn back the love of your father, if he's got any left for you.*" This is exactly what legalistic Judaism would say.
  - C. **Luke 15:20a** "And he arose and came to his father..."
    1. He did it. His self-talk wasn't just talk, it was his plans being verbalized, but he acted on them. But how's he get home? Remember, he had gone into a far country. He doesn't have a penny to his name, no money to buy a Camel or a horse. He has to walk.
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2. Don't you love that it says, "...he arose and came to his father..." He didn't know how the village would accept him, but he knew there might be a chance with his father (*It wasn't uncommon at this point that the son would sit at the gate of the family estate, sometime for days*).
  3. The Pharisees and Scribes would be saying, *"Yep, way to go boy. Time to face the music and pay the piper. Time to settle your accounts. You messed up boy, and let's see what happens next. Maybe this coming punishment will teach you the lesson you need to learn, so you never pull at stunt like this again."*
    - a. Do you feel this way about erring sinners? Do you feel this way about people who sinned against you?
- D. **Luke 15:20b** "...But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him, had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."
1. Well it's daytime, because how else could the father see him? This also means that the city is out and about, industry is happening, people are moving around. And the father sees him, we don't know, maybe by his walk, his height? *Though the younger son had tried to forget about the father, the father hadn't forgotten about him.*
  2. But it's here that the unthinkable happens. Instead of making the son suffer at the gate, instead of the son being shamed by the city, the father takes off running to greet the son.
    - a. Now, in their day, the father would've been in a long robe that went all the way to the ground, to cover his legs. It was shameful to have your legs uncovered. So the only way to run, would be to hike up your robe, gird it in your hands and take off...and this is what he did.
    - b. The Greek word here for run, literally means SPRINT. The father is sprinting to the wayward, broken and dingy son.
    - c. The father is breaking all the cultural protocols for a nobleman. He's running, past the neighbors, shouting, crying, rejoicing, and sprinting to his once dead son!
    - d. WHY? Why is the father running to meet the son? He's going to reach the son, before the city reaches him. Before the city's able to shame the son, the father's going to condense, he's going to bow so low to cover the shame of the son, to take his scorn. The father is taking what's due the son, on himself!
    - e. Is this not what Jesus has done for us? Is this not what Jesus has done for the lost sheep? For the lost coin? And now for His lost creation, for His sons and daughters?
    - f. On Calvary, because of the joy that was set before Him, He endured the same, He took our shame, He took our condemnation, He took our guilt, He covered us. Not with a swift jog towards earth, but sprinting, running at breakneck speed to reach us, before we reached hell!
  3. Well, just like the shepherd who found the sheep, or the women who found her lost coin, the father rejoices over the son. Dirty, filthy, no shower, fresh out of the pig slop, coming in by foot from a distant country, the father hugs him, embraces him, picks him up, kisses him, loves on him.
    - a. Beloved, this is what the Father does for lost children who come home. This is how the Father embraces lost children who repent. He rejoices over them. God is rejoicing in real time.
- E. **Luke 15:21** "And the son said to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son."
1. Well, not only does the son desire to repent to his father, not only does he consider it his only path forward, he actually does it.
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2. Does this speech sound familiar? We've heard this prepared speech already, in verse 18-19, but this time it's different. It's missing something. What's not there?
3. It's the phrase, "...make me life one of your hired servants." The reason it's not there is because he's been restored.
  - a. It happened in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Not when the father embraced him, but when he had the self-talk, that was his repentance (*God woke him up, and he responded*).
  - b. This wasn't repentance of good intentions; it was biblical repentance. Repentance that empowered him to get up from the pig pen and make his way back home.
4. But beloved, there's no day laborer position in God's family. There's no hired servants in His house, only sons and daughters.
5. Our job is repentance, true biblical repentance, but restoration, reception, that's the Father's job.

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. Do you know what the word prodigal means? It doesn't mean a son or daughter who use to be in the faith, but has walked away. It doesn't even mean lost. It simply means *wasteful, reckless, extravagant, uncontrolled, spendthrift*.
- B. This is why Tim Keller refers to the Father, as the Prodigal God. God is reckless in His love. He's wasteful in His love.
- C. This story takes us face to face with a God, with a Father who's reckless in His love, wasteful in His compassion, extravagant in His display of affection for erroring sinners who come home!