

April 21st– Celebrating the Repentance of Others

“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.”
(Luke 15:32)

Somewhere along the way, I bet you’ve heard the story of the prodigal son. That’s what we typically call the story found in Luke 15:11-32. As amazing as the prodigal’s repentance is, he’s really not the point of the story. As unbelievable as the father’s love is, not even He is the real story. The focus of the story is the older brother. While the first two parables in this chapter (lost sheep and lost coin) focus on the Finder of lost things, the last story focuses on those who were never “lost” to begin with.

Consider the context – Jesus was accosted by the Pharisees because He was willing to associate with tax collectors and sinners. In what I call “the parable of the older brother,” Jesus wanted the Pharisees to see that the lost son represented the sinners He was associating with. He wanted them to understand that the Father represented Almighty God – longsuffering and not willing that any should perish. That leaves the older brother, upset that his father threw a party when his prodigal brother returned home.

Today’s verse is the voice of the father, and clearly these words were directed at the Pharisees who were acting like an angry older brother, despising the repentance of sinners. The Pharisees should’ve been celebrating that so many were drawn to Christ and being saved, but instead they were unhappy. Why? Because the focus was on Jesus, and not them. How about you? Do you rejoice over the salvation of the lost, or have you been despising what you should be celebrating and encouraging?