

Luke 15:11-32

Last week we started looking at chapter 15, a chapter full of parables.

1. The parable of the lost sheep
2. The parable of the lost silver
3. The parable of the lost son

The root meaning of each of these parables is essentially the same: God desires the salvation of sinners.

1. Jesus Christ is the star of all three of these parables.
  - a. In the parable of the lost sheep he is pictured as the good shepherd.
  - b. In the parable of the lost silver he is pictured as the one who came to seek and to save the lost.
  - c. And now in the parable of the lost son, he is pictured as a gracious and merciful and compassionate Father.
2. So, the main character in today's story, is not the prodigal son, but the gracious father.

**This parable is about lavish grace!**

Read / Pray

Look at the grace poured out in the midst of such a sad story.

### **I. The Rebellion of the Son                    v11-13**

*11 And He said, "A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. 13 And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.*

This younger son was a rebellious son

1. He said to his father, give me my inheritance.
2. Pull your will out of the safe, call a lawyer, and give me what is coming to me.
3. For a son in that culture to request his inheritance early was equivalent to saying, I wish you were dead.

A son guilty of dishonoring his father to this degree could well expect to lose everything he had

1. He could expect to be permanently dismissed from the family.
2. He would be viewed as dead.
3. It was not uncommon in that time and place to hold an actual funeral for a child who disrespected and abandoned his home and family in this way.

The scribes and Pharisees expected the prodigal son's father to drop the hammer on the wayward youth.

1. After all, the father's honor had been turned to shame by his son's rebellion and here is where we see the first sign of the father's lavish and excessive grace.
2. Rather than publicly strike the boy across the face for his disrespect, tell him that he was dead to him, and hold a funeral to drive home his point, this father granted his rebel son exactly what he asked for.
3. He dug out the will, called in the lawyer, and gave him his entire inheritance.
4. That was a extremely excessive in the eyes of the religious leaders. Instead of punishment, he gave him what he did not even deserve. **LAVISH GRACE**

Have we not all done the same thing to our heavenly father?

1. We have chosen to reject His commands, refuse His authority, and go our own way while expecting him to give us our best life now.
2. In a way, we have said, you are dead to me...I am my own god. Give me my life and leave me alone.
3. And pay careful attention here, because God would be fully right, just, and fair if he struck us dead and sent us straight to hell the first time we said no to him. Lavish Grace

## **II. Ruin of the Son v14-16**

*14 Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.*

The party has ended for the son

1. His funds have run out, his friends have run off, and a famine has set in.
2. The son has lost his inheritance and he has lost his hope.

He finds himself a job feeding pigs.

1. He is at the lowest of the low.
2. Rabbis actually are quoted as saying, "Cursed is the man who breeds swine."
3. Here is this young Jew working for a Gentile, feeding the swine, and even considering eating with them.
4. Obviously, he is at his lowest point. He is ruined.

What is the father doing during the ruin of his son.

1. I think it is safe to assume that he is waiting and watching for him.
2. It is evident that the father was looking diligently for the prodigal's return.
3. Look in verse 20, "*While he was still a great way off, his father saw him.*"
4. How else could he have seen him while he was still a long way off if he were not watching and waiting for him? **LAVISH GRACE**

Here we find ourselves again.

1. We reject the Father's authority, we rebel against His laws, and we go our own way...and it never ends well.
2. The wages of sin is not life abundant, but death and destruction.
3. Many, if not most of the troubles we experience, we get ourselves into.
4. But our Father watches and waits so patiently, doesn't he. Lavish Grace.

### **III. Repentance of the Son**

*17 But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' 20 So he got up and came to his father.*

The son is awakened to his sin in these verses.

1. He sees his sin and the solution.
2. He formulates his plan and begins to carry out his plan.

Now that the boy was coming home, the Pharisees expected him to get what he deserved.

1. It would be fairly typical to punish him first by publicly shaming him.
2. A father in those circumstances might have his son sit outside the gate in public view for several days.
3. The boy would be completely exposed to the elements—and worse, to the utter scorn of the whole community.
4. In a typical village where everyone knew everyone else, the entire village would mock and verbally abuse him and possibly even spit on him.
5. He would just have to sit there and take it while he waited.

Look at what happens.

*But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

1. He ran to him.
  - a. In that culture of honor, especially in a situation like this, it would be nothing extraordinary if the father simply refused to meet the boy face to face.
  - b. Yet, here was the father not shunning his son, but running to him.
  - c. In the context of that culture, the father's action of running to the boy and embracing him before he came all the way home was seen as shameful.
  - d. Noblemen in that culture did not run. Running was for little boys and servants.
  - e. No, noblemen walked in a dignified, authoritative manner with deliberate steps.
  - f. The text uses a word that speaks of sprinting, as if he were in an athletic competition.
  - g. The father gathered up the hem of his robe and took off in a most undignified manner.
2. Not only did he run to him, but he embraced him!
3. And not only did he run to him and embrace him, but his father kissed him, and the verb tense means he repeatedly kissed him (the rag wearing, pig smelling, disrespectful son).

*21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves,*

The father quickly cut him off

1. The prodigal never even got to the part of his rehearsed speech in which he would ask to become one of the hired servants.
2. The father had already reinstated him as a beloved son, and the great celebration was to get underway. **LAVISH GRACE**

Here, I hope we find ourselves this morning.

1. We have all rejected God's authority, rebelled against His commands, and gone our own way
2. We have all suffered, at least to an extent, the consequences of our sin
  - a. Physical, financial, mental, or emotional health...at least our spiritual health
  - b. Marriages have suffered.
  - c. Families have spiraled into dysfunction
  - d. Churches have lost the power and presence of the Spirit
  - e. Society has degenerated into absolute moral chaos
3. But, the moment we determine to come to the Father...He meets us
  - a. And he meets us not with angry eye and disdain
  - b. He meets us with Lavish grace!
  - c. The moment we determine to come to the Father, we find grace and forgiveness and a warm reception.

#### 4. GOSPEL

- a. The moment we determine to come to the Father, we find grace and forgiveness and a warm reception.
- b. John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name*
- c. Verse 7 and verse 10
- d. Lavish Grace

#### IV. Restoration of the Son v22-24

*'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him,*

1. Every nobleman had a choice robe—an expensive, ornate, embroidered, one of a kind, floor length outer garment of the highest quality fabric and craftsmanship.
2. This was the kind of courtesy reserved for an extremely prestigious dignitary.
3. The father was publicly honoring his returning son not only as guest of honor at the banquet but also as a person of the utmost distinction.

*and put a ring on his hand*

1. This was the signet ring that had the family seal, so when the ring was pressed into melted wax on a formal document, the resulting seal served as legal authentication.
2. The ring therefore was a symbol of authority.

*and sandals on his feet;*

1. Hired servants and household slaves customarily went barefoot.
2. Only masters and their sons wore footwear. This is no servant. This is my son.

*23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.*

1. Such a calf would be grain fed only for an extraordinary occasion, such as the wedding of a firstborn son or a once in a lifetime banquet held to celebrate the arrival of an important dignitary.
2. The animal would be carefully selected well in advance of the occasion, generously fed, diligently cared for, and kept penned up, apart from the herd.
3. It would be enough to feed hundreds of people.
4. Preparation would take the rest of the day, and the festivities would continue deep into the night.
5. It would not be unusual for a party such as this to last three days or more. **LAVISH GRACE**

Aren't we waiting for such a celebration too if we know Him?

The excessive grace and mercy of the Father was not met with open arms by everyone.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

What happened then?

1. Did he go in and celebrate?
2. Did he walk away angry?
3. The ending simply isn't there.
4. It leaves us hanging...and it is meant to because the true ending was yet to be determined at the time of this parable's telling

Their ending was written however.

1. Since the father figure in the parable represents Christ
2. And since the younger son in the parable represents the heathen, publicans, and tax collectors.
3. And since the elder brother represents the Pharisees and religious leaders...Remember VERSE 1-2
4. The true ending of the story should read something like this: "*The elder son was outraged at his father so he turned some of the servants against him and murdered him right in the very midst of the celebratory feast!*"

Everyone who hears the story writes his or her own ending by how we respond to the kindness of God toward sinners. How are you going to respond?

1. Like a pharisee...remaining in your self righteousness
2. Like a prodigal...remaining in the pig pen
2. Or like a repenting son who has come to his senses and is fully restored and forgiven?