

EQUIP Leader Lesson Outline

August 9, 2020

Read Luke 15:11-32

The pharisees and scribes had been complaining about Jesus' kindness toward tax collectors and sinners. Jesus confronted them by telling three parables- the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. He was doing this to show them God's love for the lost sinners of the world. Today we are looking at the parable of the lost son. "Prodigal" means being wastefully extravagant. In this story the man's son recklessly and wastefully spends his inheritance. The prodigal son has come to mean someone who is spiritually lost and someone who has returned after an absence.

Read verses 11-12

A wealthy man had two sons; the younger of the sons demanded that his father give him his inheritance so he could live on his own. An heir could ask for his share of an estate before the death of his father. The father granted the son's request and divided the inheritance. How good was the father to his son? He was willing to give his hard-earned savings to one that he loved so much! Think about how much God loves you and me? Far greater than this father loved his son!

Family discussion: Can you think of some things that God has given to you? How much of it do you deserve?

Why is God so good to you? It's not because you have earned it in some special way. It's because that's who God is, "God is Love". The love of the father in our passage today is a picture of God's love for us. He blesses us and willingly allows us to enjoy all that belongs to Him.

Read verse 13

The younger of the sons traveled to a far country and wasted his money. The son disregarded his father's love and care. He decided to go his own way. He was foolish!

Family discussion: How are we like the son in the parable? What are some things that we do that displease God?

God has been very good to us. He has provided for our needs and given us so much to enjoy. Yet we do go our own way so many times and often do things that displease God. We are oftentimes like the foolish son, going our own way instead of God's way. Soon the son would have to pay the consequences of going his own way and disobeying God.

Read verses 14-19

After the son had spent all he had, a famine spread across the land and the only work the son could find was feeding pigs. This was a great humiliation for a Jew because swine were considered unclean and their meat was forbidden to eat. Starving, the son soon desired to eat the food that he was feeding to the pigs. He suddenly realized his sin against God and his father and wanted to return back home to his father's house. He would ask for a position as a hired servant.

Family discussion: When have you realized your sin against God? What did you do to fix it?

Read verses 20-24

While the boy was still a way off, his father ran to meet him. The father had been waiting for months or maybe even years for his son to come home. He had been waiting for his son to turn from his foolish ways. The father had longed to provide for the son he loved so much. The son confessed his sin and unworthiness to his father. Showing his forgiveness, the father celebrated the return of his son. The robe, ring, and sandals were signs of wealth, favor, and affection. We too have a Heavenly Father who greatly desires for each of us to repent of our sins so we can be part of His eternal family.

Read verses 25-32

Hearing the celebration, the older brother became very angry. He represents the Pharisees who were criticizing Jesus for allowing "undeserving sinners" to be a part of His kingdom. The oldest son had failed to enjoy his inheritance. However, the father assured his oldest son of his position in the family and encouraged him to celebrate on behalf of his younger brother. Jesus does not tell us how the older son responded to his father, He left it open to the pharisees to finish the story by making a decision.

Three things we can learn from this parable:

1. Sin has a high price.

The son learned that the pleasure of sin only lasted for a short time before it destroyed him. Sin has a way of stealing your joy, stealing your peace, and stealing your rest. Sin also separated you not only from God, but from your family, and friends. Sin also inflicts guilt, suffering, and regrets.

2. We overlook how blessed we are.

The son had so much growing up in his father's house, a loving family, food, a warm house, and financial security. He grew dissatisfied and unthankful. He believed that he deserved more. It was not until he lost everything that he realized how blessed he was before.

3. God loves sinners

In this parable, God is represented by the father. He waited and longed for his son to come home. When he finally saw his son making his way towards home, he ran to him with a heart of compassion and joy. Just as the father rejoiced at his son's homecoming, God the Father rejoices over every sinner that repents from their sin and turns toward him. This parable points out that God welcomes repentant sinners with joy and forgiveness, not condemnation. If you've lost your way, do not fear coming home. Our Heavenly Father is waiting to celebrate your arrival!

4. Rejoice over the repentance of sinners

The older brother was jealous that his father's house was celebrating the younger brother's arrival. The older brother had been obedient the whole time, where was the celebration for his righteousness? You see, there is a celebration for each of us when we repent from our sins and make Jesus the Lord of our life. And there will be a future party in Heaven when all of God's children celebrate Jesus! So for now, we're called to rejoice over new repentant sinners. Let us not be jealous, let us be joyful! For we have gained a new brother/sister in the family of God!

Closing Prayer

End your time together by thanking God for all he has blessed you with. Have each family member think of one person they know that is not saved. Have a silent prayer moment for each member to pray over their person. Commit to praying for this person the rest of the week. Also, pray that we would not be jealous, but rather rejoice, when good things happen to other Christians--like when a new believer repents from their sin.