

TWO LOST SONS: ONE FOUND, ONE STILL MISSING

I. Luke 15:11-32 & Ephesians 2:1-10

A. Today's text is about Jesus' parable commonly referred to as *The Prodigal Son*. Some actually call it *The Parable of the Lost Son*. But I'd like to throw out yet another title, "*Two Lost Sons, One Found, One Still Missing*."

B. When reading Jesus' parables it's important we understand the "*what*" and the "*why*" Jesus was seeking to convey. Not only does the Bible never mean what it never meant, the same is true of Jesus, He never meant what He never meant. So we dare not go too far with His illustrations and we most definitely ought not turn them into allegories of our own invention. In this case, the good doctor Luke actually tells us why Jesus told this 3-part parable. Luke 15:1-2 (ESV) says: *1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."*

C. So Jesus tells the Parable of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son(s) to contrast the self-righteous religious leaders with the sinners of every stripe seeking Jesus for freedom and salvation from their sins. One group thought it could be earned by deeds; the other out of desperation understood it was totally beyond their capability to achieve. So with that in mind, as we read this Parable with fresh eyes and open hearts, we'll see Jesus not only meant it for then and there but for here and now. He even meant it for the likes of us! Let's take a look...

D. Luke 15:11-32 (ESV) is the Parable told by Jesus...

1) **V11-12:** *11 And He said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. (The father, who loved his sons, complies with the request. Rather than a 50-50 split, the older probably got the customary two-thirds while the younger one-third.)*

2) **V13:** *13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. (Whatever he'd received in the way of land or livestock, he converted into money, then ran off and spent it all with foolish abandonment. Thus the term, *prodigal*.)*

3) **V14-15:** *14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. (Bad turns to worse. Completely alone, he's a broke foreigner in a land of calamity.)*

4) **V16:** *16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. (To Jews, pigs are unclean animals. But these pigs are eating better than he is! These pig pods would prove to be prophetic...)*

5) **V17-19:** *17 "But when he came to himself, (OV "**Came to his senses.**") he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here*

with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." (This is no scheme to get back in good graces with his dad, this is an act of desperation from a starving man!)

6) V20: 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (Know this: Fellowship had most certainly been broken, but not their relationship!)

7) V21: 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (He's broken God's commands. He's dishonored his father. He acted pridefully and selfishly as well as immorally. He'd squandered his inheritance. Contrite, broken, and desperate, he just wants to be named among his father's servants.)

8) V22-24: 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. (Robe, ring, shoes, feast = restoration.)

9) V25-29: 25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **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 was angry and refused to go in. His father came out (The same father who ran to meet one son, humbly seeks out the other!) and entreated him, **29** but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. (Hear the self-righteousness? Hear the pride & selfishness? The sense of entitlement--the you-owe-me attitude? The dishonor being spewed is appalling! His jealous heart is greener than all those pig pods!)

10) V30-32: 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' **31** And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. **32** It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'" (Sadly we don't know what ever happened to the older brother. Did he ever come to his senses? Did he ever get over his anger and jealousy? Did he ever ask his father for forgiveness? Did he ever reconcile with his brother? Or did he take his share and depart in self-righteous victimhood, reeking with pride, ingratitude, and self pity, never to return or be restored?!)

E. Obviously fleeing to a far away land isn't necessary to prove you're an arrogant rebel. The waywardness of the older son happened within his own mind & heart! His squandering took place right inside his own backyard! He too was dead! He too was lost! Sadly he was blind to his own wickedness! He was inoculated to the reality of his own diseased heart! More sadly yet, he was given no pig pods! Therefore the question is: Which brother do you identify with? For me it's both!

F. Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV) is either where you are or where you were: 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this

world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **(This either WAS you or IS you. This either was you or is you in a far away land where the pig pods look(ed) good. OR this was you or is you in your own backyard, smack dab between this ear and this ear, between your chin and your naval. But take heed, Good News follows:)** **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- **6** and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **(If that's not already you, listen closely for our Lord's invitation!)** **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

G. You should all know this: 53 years ago on this very day, July 11, 1968, Jesus Christ made a twelve year old boy His own. That boy was dead in his trespasses and sins. He was following the course of this world. He was under the influence of the prince of the power of the air. He was a son of disobedience. He was blind and he was lost and he was dead. But Jesus caused the scales to fall from his eyes. Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to awaken him. Jesus called him from his tomb and made him alive. Jesus showed him His hands and His feet. Jesus revealed to that boy that his sins were paid for in full by Himself when He died on the cross. Jesus revealed to him that He had personally absorbed God's wrath against him; that He cleansed him of all unrighteousness; that because of His great love and mercy He had adopted him as His own. That boy was me! That boy was me but this can also be you! And I pray today will be such a day for you if you've never had such a day as this! May the Lord do more than we ask or think!

*** Let's close with part of David's Prayer found in Psalm 51...**

1 Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions. **2** Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin! **3** For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us... **9** Hide Your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. **10** Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. **11** Cast us not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from us. **12** Restore to us the joy of Your salvation and uphold us with a willing spirit... **15** O Lord, open our lips, and our mouths will declare Your praise. **16** For You will not delight in sacrifice, or we would give it; You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of You Lord God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. **18** Do good to us your people in Your good pleasure. For this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Luke 15:11-32 \(ESV\)](#)

11 And He said, "There was a man who had two sons. **12** And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided

his property between them. **13** Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. **14** And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. **16** And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. **17** “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’” **20** And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21** And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ **22** But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate. **25** “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **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 was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, **29** but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ **31** And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. **32** It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

Luke 15:1-2 (ESV)

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. **2** And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- **6** and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

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A Parent's Prayer for an Unbelieving Child by Kathleen Nielson

<https://www.challies.com/quotes/a-parents-prayer-for-an-unbelieving-child/>

What Does it Mean that Jesus is a Friend of Sinners? - GotQuestions.org

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-friend-of-sinners.html>

Do for Others What Has Been Done for You - Sinclair Ferguson - Ligonier Ministries

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/do-others-what-has-been-done-you/>

Someone Needs Your Encouragement (Encouragement vs Flattery) - Marshall Segal

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/someone-needs-your-encouragement>

The Scenes They Leave Out - Seth Lewis

<https://sethlewis.ie/2021/06/30/the-scenes-they-leave-out/>

[Luke 15:3-7 \(ESV\) The Parable of the Lost Sheep](#)

3 So He told them this parable: **4** “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? **5** And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ **7** Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

[Luke 15:8-10 \(ESV\) The Parable of the Lost Coin](#)

8 Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? **9** And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ **10** Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

[Psalm 51:1-19 \(ESV\)](#)

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your steadfast love; according to Your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. **2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! **3** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **4** Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be justified in Your words and blameless in Your judgment. **5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. **6** Behold, You delight in

truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You have broken rejoice. **9** Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. **11** Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. **12** Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. **13** Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. **14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of Your righteousness. **15** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise. **16** For You will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. **18** Do good to Zion in Your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; **19** then will You delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Isaiah 66:1-2 (NIV)

1 This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house you will build for Me? Where will My resting place be? **2** Has not My hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at My word.

Matthew 9:9-13 (ESV)

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he rose and followed Him. **10** And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. **11** And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **12** But when He heard it, He said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **13** Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Mark 2:13-17 (ESV)

13 He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to Him, and He was teaching them. **14** And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” And he rose and followed Him. **15** And as He reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many who followed Him. **16** And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to His disciples, “Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **17** And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Luke 5:27-32 (ESV)

27 After this He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” **28** And leaving everything, he rose and followed Him.

29 And Levi made Him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. **30** And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” **31** And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **32** I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 7:36-50 (ESV)

36 One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him, and He went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. **37** And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that He was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, **38** and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment. **39** Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, “If this Man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.” **40** And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.” **41** “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” **43** Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And He said to him, “You have judged rightly.” **44** Then turning toward the woman He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You gave Me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet. **46** You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with ointment. **47** Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven--for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” **48** And He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” **49** Then those who were at table with Him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?” **50** And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: **10** “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ **13** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ **14** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 19:1-10 (ESV)

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.

4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was about to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” **6** So he hurried and came down and received Him joyfully. **7** And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” **8** And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” **9** And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

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Break Your light upon my child’s heart, O Lord who only said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. You sent Your light into this world, a light that shines in darkness and is not ever overcome.

O shine the light of Jesus in his heart, merciful Father, by Your Spirit, that my child may believe.

Thank You, sovereign God, that You hold my beloved child in Your hand. You always have, and all my efforts--sometimes feeble or foolish, sometimes wise--You know, You use, according to Your plan. I know that You are sovereign and that You are good, and so I still my yearning soul before Your throne.

In You is life, fully revealed and given in Your Son who died for sinners who deserve that death, who rose that sinners who believe might live. Enlarge my heart, I pray, to yearn for many sinners to believe and live.

But now I stop to pray again, and I will pray again, O Lord of life: please shine the light of Jesus in his heart, that my child may believe.