A photograph of a field of golden wheat with a path leading through it, set against a dark red background.

Jesus
The Parable Teller

THE LOST SON

LUKE 15:1-32

Parable Reminders

- A Parable is ***not*** a straightforward description of an event, just as it occurred or will occur.
- A Parable is a ***casting or placing side by side*** to a real event or ***to compare likeness or similitude*** to reveal the true meaning by interpretation .





parable of the
PHARISEE
& THE TAX COLLECTOR

Parable of The Pharisee and Tax Collector

■ Our Responsibility

- There is a direct correspondence between the depth of our humility and gratitude and the vitality of our spiritual life. The more we can appreciate the goodness and the mercy of God, the more our spirituality will mature.
- ✓ The parable of the Pharisee and tax-collector is a contrastive story with one basic message. It can be summarized by Jesus' final statement: **He who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**
- ✓ In Proverbs 27:2, Solomon expresses the principle of this parable: **"Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."** This principle works in all facets of life, but most people cannot see it at work because they see no reward for humbly working behind the scenes.

Parable of The Pharisee and Tax Collector

■ Our Responsibility

- There is a direct correspondence between the depth of our humility and gratitude and the vitality of our spiritual life. The more we can appreciate the goodness and the mercy of God, the more our spirituality will mature.
- ✓ Those who elevate themselves, Isaiah writes about such people: ". . . who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!' These are smoke in [God's] nostrils, a fire that burns all the day" (Isaiah 65:5).
- ✓ *Justified* means "to be declared righteous." The apostle Paul teaches that human beings are not justified by their works but by God's mercy—by grace (Titus 3:4-8). Our responsibilities in being justified are to humble ourselves in faith before God, repent of sin, and plead for His mercy and forgiveness.

Context:

Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:1-2

- This parable results from a statement made by the scribes and Pharisees, "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2).
- As the end of Jesus' public ministry neared, the downtrodden, the despised, the lowly, and the sinful were drawn to Him. They were sincere in their desire to be raised out of their poor condition and genuine in their desire to follow Him, and He publicly identified Himself with them. Unlike the Pharisees, these sinners knew they were sinners and needed to be saved.

■ Luke 15:4-7

- Parable on Lost Sheep
 - The sheep that was lost was worth saving, and the shepherd's pity for it motivates him to rescue it.
 - It was a serious matter to lose a sheep

■ Luke 15:8-10

- Parable on Lost Coin
 - The value of the lost silver piece motivates the woman to search her house diligently until she finds it.
 - It was a serious matter to lose a sheep; it was worse to lose money

Things to Keep in Mind: Parable of The Lost Son

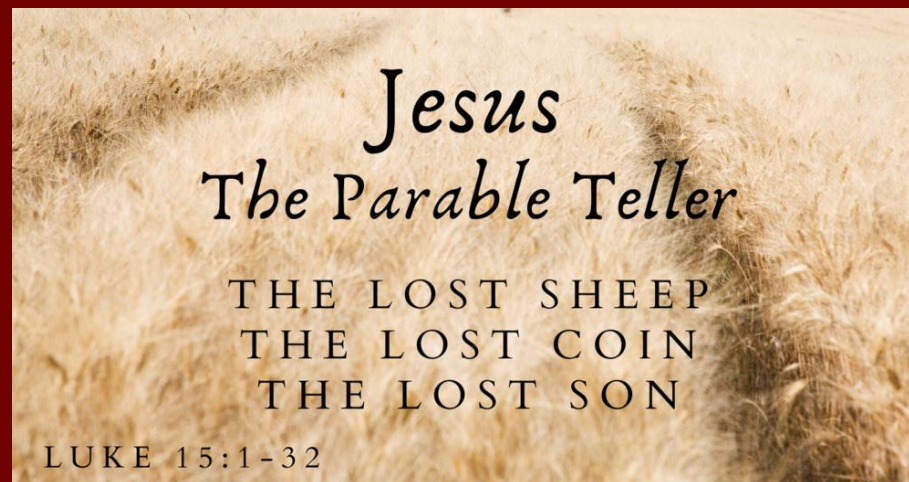
■ Luke 15:11-32

- The purpose of the three illustrations in Luke 15 is to justify Christ's conduct in receiving sinners and to show that to rejoice over their return is good and proper.
- In the first, that of the lost sheep, the lost one is viewed from man's perspective—as one who suffers and therefore needs salvation.
- In the second, that of the lost coin, the lost one is viewed from God's perspective—as one whom He is eager to find.
- In the third, the prodigal son is viewed from both man's and God's perspective—as one who "came to himself" (verse 17).

Things to Keep In Mind: Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

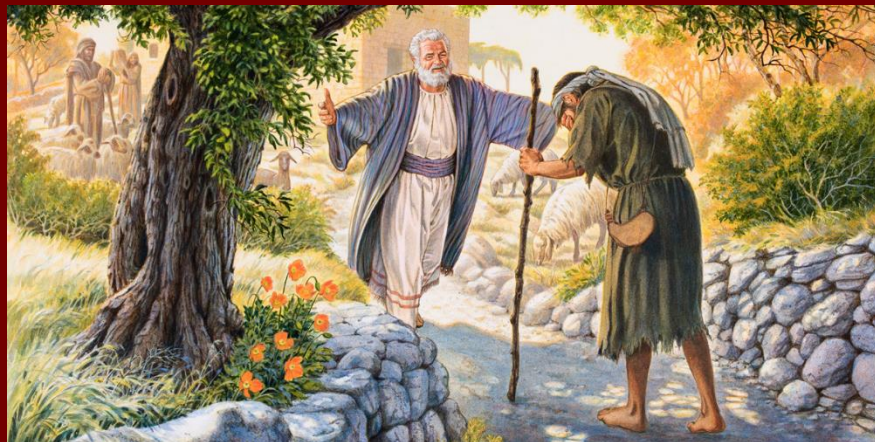
- Jesus' intention is to reveal that, as the Son of Man, He came into the world to seek and save the lost.
- The three illustrations, when combined, present us with a far more complete picture of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ than would only one.
- Concern over a thing lost and the joy at recovering it is the fundamental issue of each illustration.



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

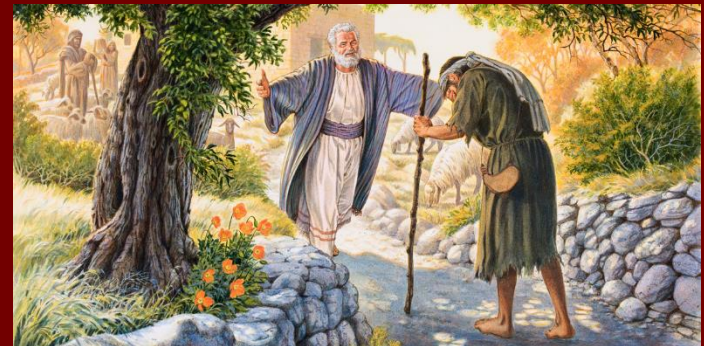
- **Younger Son**: The younger son shows a lack of respect for authority and deference to his elders.
- He thinks primarily of himself, totally disregarding how it affects others. His request for his inheritance is not to benefit others but to pursue pleasure—especially entertainment (Proverbs 21:17).
- As a result, his unwise actions bring him to the point of despair and a re-evaluation of his life. “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you”. Similar to Psalm 51:4; this appears to be a deep confession.



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

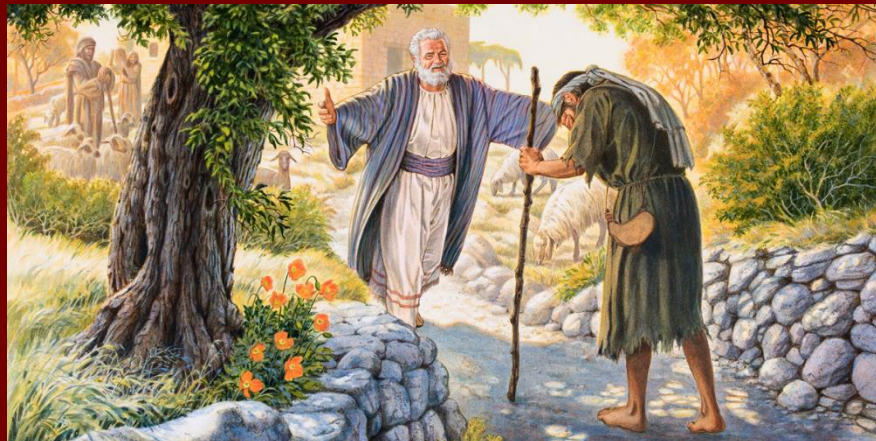
- **The Father**: The fact that the father saw the son when he was still far away suggests that he had hoped and watched for such a return.
- This father, who had most cause for bitterness and anger, ran towards his runaway son. And when they met, he embraced and kissed him, showing clearly that he still considered him his son. This pictures a relationship being restored.
- The father does not stop there though. 'Bring the fattened calf', he said, 'and kill it. We are going to have a feast in honor of my son's return'. He gives the reason for the celebration. The son had been as good as dead to him, but now had returned to life. He had been lost, but now was found.



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

- **Older Son**: When the older brother learned from one of the servants what had happened, he became extremely angry, refusing even to enter into the house..
- He spoke of how he had 'slaved' for him for years without getting any special favors.
- His bitterness is shown by his description of his own relationship to his father as 'slavery', by his disowning of his brother in the phrase 'this son of yours', and by his probably unfounded accusation that his brother squandered his inheritance on prostitutes.



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

- The father's reply was as gentle as the son's complaint was harsh. He affirmed the faithfulness of the older brother and reminded him that all he owns belongs to him too. He also insisted on the appropriateness of rejoicing, repeating the words he had spoken to the servants – the younger son had been dead and was now alive; he had been lost and was found.
- The prodigal son appears to symbolize the sinner. The clue to the first theme is the repetition of the joyful words about the one who was dead being alive and the one who was lost being found.
- In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul speaks of his readers as having been 'dead' in trespasses and sin, 'gratifying the cravings' of their sinful natures and being 'object of wrath'. ***Ephesians 2:13, But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.***
- The thought appears to be similar to the parable of the son in the 'far country'. The sinner is like this son who traveled to a distant country. He is someone who wandered far away from the Father's house, from God.

Parable of The Lost Son

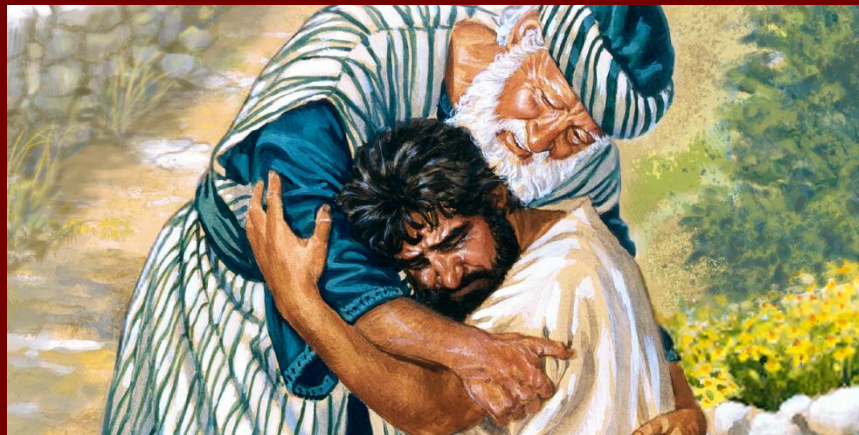
■ Luke 15:11-32

- Being “far away” or in a “far country” is a deadly situation for the sinner and there is only one thing that can undo it: repentance. The picture of the son coming to his senses, abandoning the far country and returning to his father to seek his mercy illustrates the repentance that Jesus calls for in us (II Corinthians 7:10-12).
- The decision to go home was initially motivated by a desire to improve his own situation of desperate need.
- Then he decided that in what he will tell his father, he will place himself at his discretion, asserting no rights. He recognized that he has forfeited all claim to be received as a son. He just wanted to have the possibility of being hired as a day laborer (*misthios*).

Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

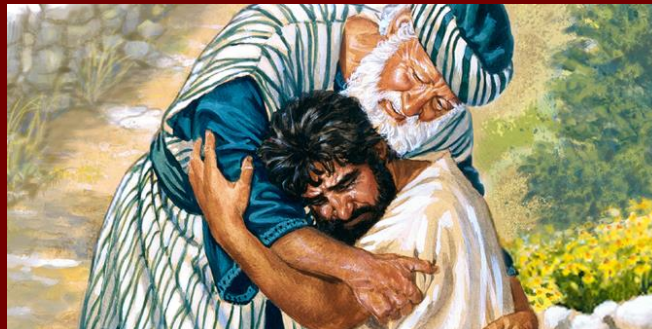
- A slave (*doulos*) was like part of the family, although part of the lower class. A day laborer was less cared for because he was hired on special occasions for one day at a time.
- By this desire, the son showed that he wanted to be a minimal burden. He accepted the consequences of his choices and was willing to be the lowest of the low. There are no excuses, only a confession and a humble request. This is what true confession is about: no claims, not even to his sonship, just reliance on God's mercy and provision.
- 'I am not worthy to be called your son'



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

- *"But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had **compassion**... (Luke 15:20)"*
- **This word 'compassion' in Greek comes from the word *splagchnon* which, in Classical Greek, is used to speak of the upper viscera of animals, as the heart, lungs and liver. In the NT, it refers to the intestines, to the bowels. By metaphor, it came to mean the deep-seated feeling within you. To have compassion is to feel with your inward being. So it is not just any kind of feeling. And that is the word used here in the parable. The father had compassion, i.e., he had a deep feeling, a deep inner sense of sympathy for his lost but repentant son.**



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

- Interestingly, this word 'compassion' (*splagchnon*) is used in the NT only with reference to Jesus. It is never used with reference to anyone else. Here are the five times that *splagchnon* is mentioned in the NT.
- Matthew 9:36. It says that when the Lord Jesus looked upon the crowd of people, he had compassion upon them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.
- It was used with respect to the feeding of the multitude in Matthew 14:14 and 15:32. When Jesus saw their hunger and their need, He had compassion on them.
- The third time, a leper was involved. A leper was the kind of person nobody wanted to have around. Jesus looked at the leper and was moved with compassion. That is in Mark 1:41.
- The fourth time Jesus had compassion was on the two blind men in Matthew 20:34. They first asked for mercy, then for the restoration of their sight. Moved with compassion, Jesus healed them.
- And the fifth time, a widow was following the body of her dead son to the burial ground, weeping over the loss of her only son. When Jesus saw her, He had compassion. Jesus revived the son. Luke 7:13.

Parable of The Lost Son

■ Luke 15:11-32

- The older son is unmoved by the return of his brother. In fact, he is angry. He has been a model son. He has done everything his father ever asked of him. He has 'slaved' for his father's benefit. But he has never had the recognition now given to the prodigal son.
- While the resentment of this elder brother is easy to understand, his protest reveals the same sort of self-righteousness shown by the religious leaders of Jesus' day. The Pharisees and the scribes also claimed to be righteous and in tune with God but their rejection of Jesus and His ministry to sinners (Luke 15:1-2) showed how far they were from the God they said they were serving.



Parable of The Lost Son

■ Key Take-Aways

- The word "lost" in Luke 15 is not related as much to the condition of what is lost as to the agonizing effect upon the one who lost it. In the first illustration, the shepherd, who seeks his lost sheep as if it is the only one he possesses, suffers more than the straying sheep. The woman deeply feels the loss of her coin, which, of course, is without life and feeling. Her poverty requires that she find it, so she searches diligently for it.
- The father feels a depth of agony neither of his sons can share; he is heartbroken over the loss of his younger son. Though he still has another son who has no desire to leave home, his father's heart goes out to the missing son in spite of his willful wickedness. God has like compassion for those who are lost in sin.
- But we can also see ourselves in the older brother. It is a common human failing to think that we are not appreciated as we ought to be, to feel that people do not give us credit for what we have done. Also, we are usually somewhat critical of those we see as having failed to live up to our standards, even if our standards are not theirs.

GROUP DISCUSSION

