

Introduction: Jesus redefines God

- The Occasion Luke 15:1
- The Conflict Luke 15:2
- The Parable Luke 15:3-32

The one parable has 3 stories.

Each story has **FIVE** things in common:

1. Something valuable is **LOST**.
2. An intensive **SEARCH** occurs.
3. That which was lost is **FOUND**.
4. A great **CELEBRATION** follows.
5. The spiritual application is **EXPLAINED**.

What do we learn from this parable? (Review)

- God deeply values irreligious, immoral, lost people.
- God is actively pursuing relationship with lost people.
- Heaven rejoices when one lost person repents.
- The value of that which is lost exponentially increases in each story.

(Sheep → Coin → Sons)

- The father in story #3 represents God.
- The two sons depict the “immoral sinners” (younger son) and “religious sinners,” Pharisees (older son).
- Both sons are equally lost, but not equally aware of their lost-ness.

What do we learn about the 3 main characters?

Luke 15:11-12

- The son’s request: “I want **MINE** now!”
- The son’s message: “I wish you were **DEAD.**”
- The implications for the father **ECONOMICALLY** and **SOCIALLY.**

- The father's unprecedented response **SHOCKED** his audience.
- The older son's shocking **SILENCE** revealed his broken relationship with his father and brother.

What can we learn about ourselves?

** Luke 15:13-17

- "... distant country..." where he's gone.
- "... severe famine..." why he doesn't just come home.
- "... feeding pigs..." can't get any more desperate
- Younger son "came to his senses."
 1. I will **RETURN** "... go back home."
 2. I will **CONFESS** "... my sin to my father and God."
 3. I will **MAKE RESTITUTION** "... a hired hand."
 4. I will **DO IT NOW** "... he got up and went."

** The son's expectations, fears, and perspective from a Middle Eastern peasant culture is available in Dr. Ken Bailey's book: *The Cross and the Prodigal*

What do we learn about God's heart?

Luke 15:20-24

1. The best **ROBE**:
2. The **RING**:
3. The **SANDALS**:
4. The **FATTED CALF**:
5. The **FATHER'S PARTY**:

The father's response is shocking, **SCANDALOUS**, and completely unexpected as he takes the **SHAME** his son deserves.

Jesus' message to us is...

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do you need grace in your life right now?
2. Which part of this story resonated the most with you?
3. Who in your relational network has hit "rock bottom" and needs to know God values them through you?
4. What step of faith do you need to take to draw near to your heavenly Father?