

The Father Heart of God

Luke 15:11-24 – *Parable of the Lost Son*

Did you know that regardless of our relationship with our earthly fathers, we have available to us a relationship with our Heavenly Father – God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth?

Most of us have heard the *Parable of the Lost Son*, better known as the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*.

Nowhere in the story, nowhere in this text, nowhere in any translation, nowhere has Jesus ever called the younger boy a *prodigal*.

We tend to think of *prodigal* to mean lost or rebellious or wayward.

The word *prodigal* (which comes from the Latin word 'prodigus') means extravagant, lavishly and extremely generous.

With the definition of *prodigal* in mind, who then is the *prodigal* in the story?

It surely is not the younger son because **he's just reckless, doing stupid things and making bad choices.**

But what does the father do when the younger son comes home? **The father lavishly throws his love on him.**

We are more bent on describing the younger son by his lifestyle, by his carelessness than the fact that he is lost.

Even before leaving to a ***far country***, the father is **extravagantly generous with his resources** and then is **lavishing his love** on this undeserving son as soon as he comes home.

The father is the *prodigal* in this story.

The posture of our Heavenly Father is to lavish His love on us even though we do not deserve it.

1 John 3:1 (NIV) says, *“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are!”*

He calls us His children.

We all know our weaknesses, our sins, our mistakes, our habits. We all know the distant countries that we have wandered off to.

The distant country is any place we go in our heart or our mind:

- where we don't want God to know we're there
- where we don't want the Father to see us
- where we don't want God to interfere

And we know our own distant countries. And so does God. None of that is a surprise to Him. He knows all of it.... and yet HE LOVES US!

God hates sin because that's what separates us from Him. This is what takes us away from home and drives us away from Him. But through Jesus Christ, God has made a way where there was no way. That's the path that this boy turned to walk on.

Holiness is not what God wants from us, it is what God wants for us.

You don't make yourself holy by changing your behaviour. *Man has nothing in himself except it comes from above.* God makes us holy by washing our sins away.

What was the response of the younger son to the father's love?

Luke 15:20-21- ²⁰ *“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

²¹ *“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

How about the older brother? What was his response to the father's love?

Luke 15:29 – ²⁹ *But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.”*

Both sons were lost, not fully understanding that they were in that most privileged position as sons and therefore acted differently. They both saw themselves as slaves.

The younger son (the rebel one) said, *“I’m not worthy to be called your son. Just let me be your servant.”*

On the other hand, the older son (the self-righteous one) said, *“All these years I’ve been slaving for you.”*

Neither one of them understood who they were.

The younger son left home but the older son had never really been home. And yet the father went out looking for them both.

The father did not withhold his love and forgiveness until he sees how his children are going to behave themselves.

The father responded with an immediate acceptance.

Observations:

- the kiss came before the confession
- the father received the younger son before he even said a word
- he embraced the younger son while he was still dressed in his pig clothes

Romans 5:8 (NIV), “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

He didn't die for us after we confessed. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

That's the Father's (*prodigal*) extravagant, lavishly and extremely generous love!

That's the Father heart of God!