

Come Into the Party
The Prodigal God and the True Elder Brother

March 22, 2009

The Lost are Found – Luke 15:1-32

- Have you ever **lost something** of value? What did you **do**?
Ex. What if Brittany lost her engagement ring
- Have you ever **lost someone** valuable? What did that **feel** like?
Ex. Relative or friends death, leaving, divorce, reject...

READ Luke 15:1-32

The Audience

- sinners drawing near to Jesus
- **Pharisees** object (as religious people like to do)

The Sheep and the Coins

- Stories focus on search for **lost** item (not items fault)

The “Rebellious” Son:

- Focus here **2 sons willfully lost** who come to father

“Finding Oneself”

- leaves home to find self, spend all reckless
- **reckless** can be party ... but **also** consumed by job, sports, travel, middle-class lifestyle...
- hits bottom, no where to go ... maybe return?

“Losing Oneself”

- not ‘try’ to get lost, wake up and find self lost
- **drift into sin** / step off cliff - often think of sexual, but **Madoff** example of financial / pride
- ex. **Me** in high school **curse out friend** in class

The “Righteous” Son:

- This is danger to us in the church, it was the Pharisees

“Saving Oneself”

- righteous, does all the father wants – but **no joy**
- self-righteous – doing for **self, pride**
- **for both brothers – find own salvation!**

The Prodigal God:

Prodigal: “recklessly extravagant, having spent everything”

- father wealthy, with 2 sons, full plans to leave inheritance
- **willing to part with** 1/3 of all he owns, willing to let son depart, willing to allow son to fail, potentially lose son forever!
- **On sons return: not** bitter, angry, aloof, needing proof – not even “if repent I will accept”
- **runs to greet**, embraces, put signs of family / office on SON
- throws the **ultimate party** (also reaction in **1st 2 stories**)
- goes out to **second son**, takes rejection and abuse, still calls son
- invites him into the party as well
- as enacted, **Jesus willing to invite in Pharisees who’ll kill him**

The True Elder Brother:

- If younger brother leaves, **what should older do?** (notice what happens in **sheep and coin story** that does not happen with sons)
- Elder brother should **go after & bring back ... at his own cost!**
- **redemption is never easy or cheap** – would cost older bro a lot
- The elder brother is an **anti-type of Christ** ... meant to highlight the opposite of Christ

- **God sends his own son into the world**, while we were sinners, to die for us, so that we could come home
- that is what we really all long for – **home** – the younger son gave up moral restraint and spent his inheritance for pleasures of the world, the older resisted the world and put on all moral restraint to for a future inheritance, but both end up alienated from the father and the party, both lost, not at home in this world
- father so loved us that he gave his son to find and redeem us!

- *story: “Prodigal God” pages 86-87*

(Hia & Lan from “Three Seasons”)

- **Christ striped** of robe, beaten, crucified, left outside the city – for you and me who had rejected the father and killed the son!

- Turn to **JOHN 10:14-18** – The **shepherd has other sheep** that are not yet in the fold, and so **he lays down his life for them!**

- *more on the cost to Christ in the next 2 weeks – look at cross*

The Earthly & Heavenly Party:

- Note the ending of the first 2 stories: **joy in heaven** and before angles over 1 sinner who repents
- Note the ending of the 2 sons story: **Great Banquet**
- Note the ending of Revelation: **Banquet of the Lamb**
- **The father does not just offer forgiveness, he does not even “just” offer sonship! He Throws a Huge Party!**

- The **party is contrasted with the elder son**, the Pharisees, ‘religiousness’ – **religion breed anger and bitterness, Christ brings joy and celebration** – unlike any other religion, unlike many who call themselves Christians based on works or knowledge of the bible alone, in the gospel sin and death are defeated, the heart is changed, true sonship and joy are offered!

- **Keller notes 4 things about the feast of salvation:**
 - **Experiential**
 - “Taste and see that God is good”
 - Jonathan Edwards: “There is a difference between believing God is holy and gracious, and having a new sense on the heart of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. The difference between believing God is gracious and tasting that God is gracious is as different as having a rational belief that honey is sweet and having the actual sense of it’s sweetness.”
 - **Material**
 - Jesus was bodily resurrected and ate real food – the banquet is material – we do not just merge into the spirits...
 - **Individual**
 - each person is invited in, and needs to come themselves
 - **Corporate**
 - We are each unique, and we need each part to be made whole
 - ex. C.S. Lewis comment after one of the Inklings rather than giving Lewis more of Tolkien, he now has less, because Tolkien can not laugh in the way he did at the type of joke only their friend could tell

An Invitation to the Party:

- let me close with a final parable:

- **LUKE 14:16-24**

- The father has prepared a great banquet and he has come out to ask you to come in ...

- Will you tell him you **want your inheritance** to party your way

- Will you tell him you have **already squandered the inheritance** and brought shame on him and therefore are **not worthy to enter**

- will you tell him you have **done all he ever asked** and therefore **deserve something different**

- will you **give an excuse** that you are busy with **school, work, family, relationships, love, etc** and might consider it later

- or will you **accept the invitation** of the father and **heed the call of the son he has sent to die to rescue you**

- If you **have heeded** that invitation or **decide to heed it tonight**, then come into the party, put down that burden of past sin and righteousness, and accept the free gift of the fatted calf offered for you, the lamb that was slain, and come to the feast

- **come experience the feast with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, with both head and emotions, come take the joy He desires to fill you with**

- as we heard **this morning**, come and taste of **true hope**, lasting hope, a hope that will not disappoint, of an **inheritance guaranteed for all eternity**, and a great banquet of which the joys of this life are only but a taste

- and **then go out there in the highways of your life and compel others to come in**, go to the worst sinners you know, and the most self-righteous as well, to the younger and the older brother, and invite them to join you at the table!