

## **THE TWO LOST SONS. | Luke 15:11-32**

### **I. THE PARABLE OF THE TWO LOST SONS**

- A. **Context:** This is a story Jesus is telling **the Pharisees and Scribes** (the believers or faithful of that time). **It's a story about two lost brothers and the Father's heart for both.**
- B. **Our theme:** We're all wrong, but we're all loved.
1. In this story **both brothers** are lost. **Both brothers** are wrong. **Both are after the Father's things, neither are about the Father.** The beautiful part of the story is that while neither is for the Father, but **the Father is for both.**
- C. This Parable does **2 things:**
1. **Redefines God**
  2. **Redefines Sin**

### **II. THE YOUNGER SON**

- A. The sin of the Younger son is self-evident, but maybe **even more terrible** when you look at it in context culturally:
1. **First**, he asks for his inheritance before his father is dead. This was essentially wishing his Father dead. He was about himself not the Father.
  2. **Second**, this was an absolute humiliation on the Father, family, and estate. The son defecting in this way results in a loss of honor and respect for the family as a whole.
  3. **Third**, this was a huge burden financially as the Father had to liquidate a third of his estate to give to the son. **The son was asking his father to tear his life** apart, so he could go live a life of excess.
- B. The son hits rock bottom. Squanders every cent and comes crawling back admitting his failures and with a plan for restitution.

- C. **The Father doesn't even acknowledge his apology!** He instead throws an epic feast. He kills the fatted calf (**which was a rare honor**). He puts a robe on his back (**covering his shame**) ring on his finger (**restoring his place of authority**) and shoes on his feet (**restoring his dignity**), and says you are my son (**reaffirming his identity**)!
1. He matches the son's radical spending **BY radically spending to forgive him**. He publically lavishes forgiveness, love and mercy on the son. **He publically re-instates him into the family** and as an heir again and makes **NO MENTION** of the inheritance squandered or the shame he brought on the family.
  2. He does this amongst the community that shamed the Father. He invites them to show them **the type of honor He cares about**.

### III. THE OLDER SON

- A. His heart is set against the father but in a very different way, which is the aim of the story as Jesus is telling this story to "older sons" the Pharisees.
- B. The older son brings public shame on his family by staying outside the celebration. It would have been very noticeable that he was missing. He was the future patriarch of the family, and the primary heir.
- C. **He refuses to see His inheritance spent in such a manner.** He responds with disrespect to his father by addressing him with "look" instead of "my esteemed father" as was custom publicly.
- D. He was working hard with everything he had to live by the book and he expected it to result in the father publically honoring him. When his brother gets honored instead he alienates himself against his father.
- E. **He was about himself just like his younger brother.** He just went about it another way. Instead of doing everything wrong, he strived to do everything right and felt his father owed him. The Elder brother wasn't lost in spite of His goodness, **he's lost because of it.** His sin was his goodness.
  1. He says so himself "here why I reject you father (God) I've never disobeyed you." **It's not his sin keeping him from the Father, its his goodness.**

**IV. JESUS' PARABLE REDEFINES EVERYTHING:**

- A. **The Gospel of Jesus** is *not* Religion vs Irreligion, Morality vs Immorality, Conservative vs Liberal, **it's something ENTIRELY different.**
1. **Elder Sons say** the good people are in and the bad people **are out.**
    - a. *Moral Conformity, Conservative, Religious Obedience, Self-Righteousness*
  2. **Younger Sons say** the open tolerate people are in and the bigoted intolerant people **are out.**
    - a. *Self-Discovery, Liberal, Moral Relativity, Anti Righteousness*
  3. **Jesus says the HUMBLE are in and the PROUD are out.**
  4. **Religious people obey God to get things. Gospel people obey God to get God. To resemble him, to love him, to know him.**

**V. JESUS REDEFINES GOD**

- A. God is a father. Not an ambivalent being high and separated from us ruling coldly based on the law.
- B. Jesus is saying God is a father and THIS is the type of Father he is:
1. **Our God is gracious and patient:** The Father honors His youngest son's request, and takes on the shame and pain that it causes. Culturally the father would've beat his son and cast him out of the family. Here he obliges, ***takes on the shame***, and doesn't violate his free will.
  2. **Our God's love is Prodigal and can't be earned.** The Father ***RUNS to his son*** when he comes back. (Which culturally was unheard of) He doesn't accost him for his wrong doing. He covers the marks of his previous life with a Robe. He restores him with out the son having to do any restitution with a ring.
    - a. ***Jesus shows us we can't earn or change God's mind*** about how He feels about us. **His love is ours! Forever. Always. Completely.**

3. **Our God is faithful to pursue us even when we are refuse Him.** He goes out to his oldest son. He tenderly pleads with His son and tells him **“All I have is yours”** and asks him to come celebrate with Him.
4. Everything the son has is God's, not His. God is looking for His son's heart and offering His heart to his son.

## VI. JESUS REDFINES SIN

- A. Essentially sin is not only doing wrong, but it's doing right for the wrong reasons. Sin therefore is: **Anytime you choose yourself over God.**
- B. **Christianity isn't about doing wrong things vs right things.** Our status with God isn't based on our holiness or righteousness. Our status with God is based our **humility vs our pride.** (**James 4:6- “God gives grace to the Humble and opposes the proud” said also in 9 other scriptures**)
  1. In other words. Will we come God and submit our lives to Him and let Him loves us finally. Or will we stand outside working ourselves to the bone to be good enough, judging those not working as hard and ultimately turning up our nose at God's Help?
- C. For many the effort to do good works is to save themselves. But then they get the glory that's God's. **Only God can save us** and only He gets the glory for our righteousness as His grace trains us and empowers us.
  1. **Do we obey to get something? Or do we obey to get God?**
  2. Love therefore must be not just our duty, but our delight, *our reason for obedience.*

## VII. APPLICATION

*“But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen”* **Rev 2:4-5**

- A. **“Love God and do as you please, because if you truly love him you will never do anything that doesn't please him.”** –St. Austine
- B. **We need to return to the love we had at first.** We love God on God's terms, not our own. Love requires obedience, but our obedience is empty without love.