

Family Stories

The Waiting Father Luke 15:11-32

- Prodigal Son story – a favourite story for many people
- Perhaps better named the Story of Two Sons
- Better yet – the Waiting Father

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

Luke 15:1-2

- According to the religious those coming to hear Jesus are 'sinners & tax collectors' (v1) – people of the land

- The religious are grumbling about who Jesus welcomes (v2) – 'the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!"' (Luke 7:34)

- Eating was a sign of welcome
- It was a custom that spoke of acceptance
- It speaks of the inclusiveness of Jesus

Jesus tells 3 parables in the immediate context

- i. The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7)
- ii. The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- iii. The Waiting Father (Luke 15:11-32)

The Younger Son & the Father

Luke 15:11-24

The Journey Away (v11-16)

- A story about a father & 2 sons
- The younger son wants his inheritance now (v12)
- An unusual but plausible request

To a Distant Country

- He squanders his inheritance in dissolute living
- Unfortunately a famine in the land occurs simultaneously and the son is forced to work on a pig farm



- We observe a deliberate choice that goes bad for the younger son
- This contrasts with the 'foolish sheep' (v3-7) and the 'lost coin' (v8-10)

The Journey Home (v17-24)

- The young man 'came to himself' (v17) – a moment of awareness/introspection
- I am worse off than my Father's servants. I will return home/confess my error/ work as a servant (v18-19)

The Waiting Father

- The father sees his son on the road
- He is filled with compassion
- He runs to him – hugs & kisses him

Received and Celebrated

- The father receives him back as son and throws a party (v22-23)
- He gives him a ring to reconfirm his status as son
- They kill the fatted calf to throw a great party of celebration

My son was **dead**, is **alive** again; was **lost** and is **found**.

- The emphasis in the sentence is the end – **is found**

The Setting – Luke 15:1-2

- The application is about 'sinners being found'
- Sinners coming home; returning from the distant country
- A story of grace

The Elder Son & the Father

Luke 15:25-32

The Elder Son Responds

- He hears the music & dancing (v25) – learns that a party is being thrown for his brother
- His response is one of anger & rejection (v28)

The Pleading Father

- The father goes out to plead with the elder son (v28)
- 'all that is mine is yours' (v31)
- The father loves both sons equally
- It is not a story of competition or comparison

Why Celebrate?

- It is the right thing to do
- The key idea is repeated in v24 & 32: dead to life / lost now found

- We don't learn of the elder brother's ultimate response
- But the parable points back to the judgmentalism of the Pharisees (v2)
- The self-righteous always feel unappreciated & hard done by

Going Forward

The Father's Reckless Love

- The older brother may have a point 'Is your response to my younger brother fair?'

Come Home

- This parable is not about winners & losers; not about either/or but about both/and
- It portrays the love of Abba for all of us as we come home

The Waiting Father

- A father characterized by grace, compassion & love
- Ready to receive all who want to come home