



Will you join in the  
celebration?

Luke 15.11-32

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# Luke 15.11-32



<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup> “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

## Luke 15.11-32

<sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup> “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!’

## Luke 15.11-32

<sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father.

# Luke 15.11-32



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

<sup>22</sup> “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

## Luke 15.11-32

<sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup> "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

<sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

## Luke 15.11-32

<sup>28</sup> “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.

<sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

## Luke 15.11-32

<sup>31</sup> “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”



# Characters in the Parable

The younger brother – the wild rebellious son

The father

The older brother – the clean-Living, dutiful son



# Characters in the Parable

The younger brother – the wild rebellious son



# Characters in the Parable

The father



# Kezazah

If a Jewish son lost his inheritance among Gentiles, and returned home, the community will perform a ceremony, called the *kezazah*. They would break a large pot in front of him and yell, “You are now cut off from your people!” The community would totally reject him.

(Kenneth Bailey, *The Cross & the Prodigal*)



# Characters in the Parable

The older brother – the clean-living, dutiful son



# Parable of reversal

Luke 15:1-2a

“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

# Luke 15:6b-7

...‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.



## Luke 15:9b-10

.... ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”





# Two points for reflection



1) If I live a good life, then God must give me a good life.

# Two points for reflection



2) He cared more for himself than for his father and his brother.

# Lack of compassion

We lack compassion for the lost. We have long forgotten what it was like to live without hope, lost and apart from Christ. We rarely consider that those who do not obey Christ “will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

# Lack of compassion



We just don't care that much. We might say we care, but we rarely cry out to God for the salvation of our lost neighbors, coworkers, and classmates. Paul's compassion in Romans 9:3 is utterly foreign to us: "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers."

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# Father's loving response



The heart of the father is love and forgiveness

# We are God's children (1 John 3:1)



“See what **great love** the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called **children of God!** And that is what we are!”

# We are blessed (Eph. 1.3)



“<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”



# We are all saved by grace (Eph. 2.8-9)



“<sup>8</sup> For it is by **grace you have been saved**, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> **not by works, so that no one can boast.**”

# Questions for reflection



- Do you find yourself trying to do good to earn your salvation or the approval of God?
- Do you harbour any resentment towards God?
- What is holding you from understanding the heart of our heavenly father who longs for you to experience His joy when a sinner repents.