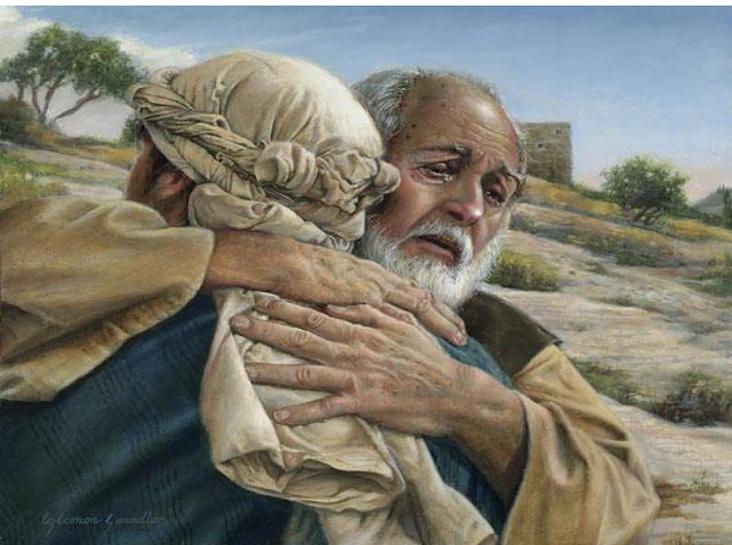


# The Father, the Pharisees and the Two Lost Sons (Luke 15:11-32)





# Setting the scene and context

- When read this passage we need to read in light of verses 1 & 2...
- “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 15:11-32

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

13 “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. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

## Luke 15:11-32

17 “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! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.

“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.

## Luke 15:11-32

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.’”

22 “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. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

## Luke 15:11-32

25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 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. 30 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

31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 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.’”



## Background Teaching v11-12

- “Share of the estate” would be one third, two thirds to older brother (Duet 21:17)
- “I want my share of the estate” is like saying “I wish you were dead and I want my money now”.
- Like the Pharisees listening. They wanted the Kingdom, but not Jesus.



## Background Teaching v13-16

- “squandered his wealth on wild living” is like our kids going to live in Kings Cross and living like the locals.
- “The distant country” is outside Jewish territory where there are no synagogues or the Temple
- Pigs were unclean to Jews and by feeding them or eating their food it was as low as a son could go.



## Background Teaching v17-20

- Came to his senses and prepared speech for his father. Motivated by his hunger and situation.
- The use of the word “heaven” rather than God shows he did not want to blaspheme in error.
- Father running would be shameful. Lifting his robes and exposing his legs was not done, but he did it anyway.



## Background Teaching v21-24

- His prepared speech was not finished. Father was too excited and busy celebrating. His son was alive.
- The robe was for guest of honour, ring signified access to family wealth (AMEX Gold card), sandals for rich people and fatted calf was for special occasion only.



## Background Teaching v25-32

- Contrasts the older son not happy with the father or the younger son. Angry and disrespectful.
- “Look”, “never gave me”, “slaving”, “this son of yours”.
- “This brother of yours”. Reminds him of his dead brother is now alive.
- While older son is angry and disrespectful, father is open and compassionate to both sons.



# Application Point 1

**From the father we can see what it is to truly love, accept and forgive those who have gone astray.**



## Application Point 2

**As Christians we can never be like the son who could not forgive and accept his brother**



## Application Point 3

**Do you relate to one of the characters  
in the Parable?**

# Summary

This parable of the lost son, gives us a great picture of God's welcoming love for us all. In the first part (verses 11-24) we saw the sense of joy and restoration when the lost son is found. In the second part (verses 25-32) we saw the wrong attitude of the elder brother. Like the Pharisees, he could not comprehend the meaning of forgiveness and acceptance of "unclean" people.

While all along the father remains constant in his love for both sons...

# Summary

By telling the story Jesus identifies himself with the Father God in his loving attitude to the lost. Jesus represents the Triune God and their joint mission of bringing the world back to Themselves. Like the father in the story who was overjoyed, it should bring joy for us as Christians when someone comes home to Him. We can never be like the older brother or the Pharisees in our attitude to others.

Let us pray.