



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 79 “When the Lost are Found” By Pastor Jody May

Luke 15:11-24 ESV

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to^[b] one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’^[c] ²² But the father said to his servants,^[d] ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

Intro: (STARGIRL)...

A shameless request leads to a shameless rebellion. And all of that, as I told you, pictures the irreligious, rebellious, immoral sinner, the very kind of person that Jesus was associating with. The people who were treated badly by the culture, who were scorned and made outcasts by the society, they were as bad as bad can be. This young man demonstrates someone who's gone as low as



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you can go, all the way to the bottom: in a Gentile country, living in an outrageous and immoral way, ending up not only taking care of pigs but eating with pigs, becoming one of them. This is as bad as it gets. And he ends up destitute and helpless. – MacArthur summary¹

We are entering into the story today where things begin to turn around for this lost son, whom really represents the people that Jesus came for. It turns around not because he had made up his mind to turn over a new leaf, to love himself better, to have his best life now, NO, it was a **supernatural act of God**. The picture that Jesus is painting here is how people come to God, it is not of their own power but by the will of **God that has ELECTED to save**. Showing it was not because of works this young man was saved but by God ‘s will and power alone.

Not only that, but you also see the resulting emotion of the action done by God - **JOY!** Remember this story is connected to the lost sheep and coin and that Jesus was teaching people that **God REJOICES over the lost when they are found!** This is why **Jesus has come, to SAVE THE LOST! (Luke 19:10)**. Jesus is putting into the minds of the listeners the Gospel truth that people who repent and turn to God because they see God for who He truly is, those are the ones that enter into the Kingdom of God. NOT the ones that believe their actions bring them to God, that was the teaching of the Pharisees.

Family you will never get back home on your own power, and if that’s what you think today your probably still not there. Today, listen to the story of the second person in this family, **the FATHER**. Jesus is using that character to teach you about His Father.

MP: To understand the joy of God the Father over the Lost when they come home AND see what HE has done to get you to come home.

1. A Son’s Repentance

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-202/the-tale-of-two-sons-part-2>



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 79 "When the Lost are Found" By Pastor Jody May

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father.

Notice ¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, translated he "came to his senses". Remember he had been bombed out of his mind, delirious from the lifestyle he had been living, had gotten so low that he has been relocated to the pig pen. Look, I don't know if you have ever been this low, but this is the **point where all that you were brought up to be had finally been thrown out the window**, there is nothing to go back to. He has no connection to his home anymore because taking that inheritance was the same thing as stating to his father, "**you're dead to me.**"

- No going back to high school reunions because they would never let him back in town for what he did.
- No visiting for the holidays because he would find no hospitality anywhere.
- No invites to family functions for he disowned them first so now he was viewed as a Gentile, a pagan.

The reality is the son had chosen the road to death and has already gone back to the dirt!

My family, can I tell you what that feels like, when you have committed heinous treason against your God, when you have done things that are so cruel and ungodly, when you are so black with sin, **it's not that your hope is failing but hope was non-existent, it's not even a reality!**

The Bible calls that being spiritually dead and according to God's Word, **even if you have not felt that low or do not think you were that low you were and if you totally disagree with me YOU ARE.** The scripture says we were all at one time in that condition. **BUT BECAUSE OF GOD**, you came back to your senses.

Ephesians 2: 1-5 ESV



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2 And you were **dead** in the **trespasses** and **sins** ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom **we all once lived** in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

The son remembered the Father and His goodness and notice he DID NOT come to senses and say, “What am I doing!?” There is a difference there. The world’s way of coming to your senses is to see that what you are doing is foolish, but that can’t save you, try something else! The son was already there and tried everything, he knew what he was doing now was out right rebellion. **No, coming to his senses was remembering how gracious His Father really was!**

‘How many of my father's hired servants have **more than enough** bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father,

Parents that is why it is so important for you to train up your child in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6), because they need to remember in their rebellious days what God looks like, and hopefully you have **impressed upon them that God is Just and Gracious!** The Father, hired day workers, every day, and on top of that He fed them, like a free cafeteria. Even those outside the family received gracious treatment from the Father. Then he decides what he’s going to say to dad:

and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”

Dad, I have sinned against Heaven, he won’t say God’s name **showing his respect for God** meaning he has returned with a **proper view of God** now. ‘I’ realize I have not honored you as the law commands, I have lost, squandered my birthright, there is nothing left to connect me to you, I can’t be called your son. He’s **admitting the chasm** he caused between them. Just treat me like those on the outside of your home.



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You see it is only when you have undergone a true **Regeneration**, the spiritual act of God bringing us to our senses, fully understanding what you have done, not blaming anyone else, not your social status, your environment, your upbringing, your opportunities, just you baby, and **ONLY THEN** can you truly **REPENT**.

His repentance is full, he not only believes he was wrong, but **he also sees that there is nothing he can do to make it better**. All he can do is throw himself at the father for grace because he has already received the condemnation.

I think it is also important here to stop and look at the **perfect way** the father **disciplined** his child. You may be, “Wait, what, where did I miss that?”

That Father must have **lavished but not spoiled, lavish is to give extravagantly to spoil is to give too much and ruin**, because the son fully understood that there would be no way to live under the same roof and have the same type of lifestyle he wanted, while dad was alive for He was holy/righteous. He never asked him, there was no arguments, he asked for the money and the dad released him perfectly. **He knew that the world would teach his son what he could not**.

We are the same way, we all have to **learn two things for true repentance; 1st**, We have to learn how Lavish God is -how Gracious, Steadfast, Enduring, Compassionate, Merciful, a Perfect Loving Father. **2nd** that the world can't compare to Him in fact it **leaves you hungry**.

The **world is the best teacher** sometimes when it comes to **learning just how wonderful our God is**. The mud is the best place to bring to your mind what you are missing, what really taste good, and where is the table that can fill you up?

Then the son exercises what regeneration gave him, the part that makes repentance work, true **FAITH**.

20 And he arose and came to his father.



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It was a grace empowered repentance displayed by the act of faith witnessed by the physical reaction of **getting up and walking out!**

My prayer for all of us today is that we have come to that part in our lives where we all are ready to turn our backs on the world, get up and walk on home back to God. Because this son’s story, which is really our story, gets even better!

2. A Father’s Display

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

Family, there’s more good news, you don’t have to clean yourself to get back to him, your faith that was a gift, has saved you and God is going to accept you back with all your scars because to him your clean now, the rebellion is over. That was not what this son was expecting that’s now how his world worked.

In His world:

if he did work as long as he needed to and did all the reparations and all the restitution and paid back in full what he owed, then he could be reconciled and only then. All the rabbis taught that. All the rabbis taught that repentance was work a man does to earn God's favor when he feels sorry for his sin. That's what repentance was, you feel sorry for your sin, you want to be restored to God so you do work and by that work you gain favor with God by making restitution. Everybody knew that was the way it was done. And the village would — even after they had heaped scorn on him for long enough — would let him work there with a measure of dignity.²

It was expected that the son would fall at his father’s feet and beg to come back, and the father would make him wait outside of the town for days. You see that allows the whole town to come by and berate him for what he had done. To shame him, scorn him, and remind him of his place in society he was about to walk back into.

^{2 2} <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-202/the-tale-of-two-sons-part-2>



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The text says explains though an **unexpected behavior**, “**But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.**” Of course, dad has been watching for that boy ever since he left, as we all would, and everybody knows it. The text says, “**a long way off, his father saw him.**” Meaning it was daytime, people were busy bustling about, doing work, going to the well, everyday activity. Then there was that moment, the moment the father saw him and, in that moment, he felt compassion for him, the Greek is the word *splänkh-ne'-zo-mi*, it is a gut wrenching, pain in the stomach feeling. It is to be **consumed with the feeling for another**, it is the same feeling Jesus has for those that need Him. Then comes the most unexpected behavior, “**ran and embraced him and kissed him.**”

In that day it was totally disrespectful for a man the father’s age, the father’s demeanor, the father’s position as a wealthy landowner, to run anywhere. You didn’t run to people, people run to you, to do your bidding.

The father would also be wearing a robe, a long robe in that day, as was custom. The thing is though it says he sprinted to his son. He would have to held up his robe to do that, in the middle east that is a huge sign of disgrace. So, what in the world is going on here!?

The father, in a split instant, decides to run past the town, in an utter show of disgrace to get to his boy. To keep them from getting to his boy first, to chastise him, to berate him, and instead he shamed himself to do it.

Why does the father act this way? Because this display of who the father is, is the portrait of our Father God and His Compassion towards us!

Joel 2:12-13 ESV

Return to the Lord

¹² “Yet even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to me with all your heart,



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with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ and rend your hearts and not your garments.”
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and he relents over disaster.

Our Heavenly Father when we come home **runs to us**, in front of all the Universe to see, and says that’s my boy, that’s my girl, get away from Him! I suffered for Him, I have been waiting for Him, you shamed me be the way I have been treated, I endured all the slander of my name for them to come home!

If you have ever thought family, that God did not want you, you are dead wrong. The Father waits for you, He is looking for you, and He is burning with gut wrenching compassion to see you walk out on this life and come home. He doesn’t care about your dirt, your scars, and your unsightly appearance, His firstborn has made you cleaner than you can know on this side of eternity. Don’t trust your feelings on this, trust His. The question is not if He will accept you, if you have truly repented, the question is are you prepared to be loved lavishly upon your return, contrary to what you may think about yourself.

To honor this love we can do something, this son can do something, let’s learn from him.

3. A Public Confession

²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

The son makes a public declaration of sin, of his true reality, showing the greatness of the Father. Repentance leads to a true public confession. He let’s the town know he’s not trying to slide in, he sees the shame he brought on his father, **he doesn’t stop short, he admits his guilt.**

For us, this is why we are Baptists. At Baptism is where we publicly confess that we were lost, we had sinned, we had brought shame, and we claim nothing other than association to Christ. That He speaks for us now, that’s next week.... At



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baptism we show we are done with the world and it shows our restoration to life. Baptism shows we have gone through Repentance, it shows our Conversion, it shows that we have been grafted in by election, it shows the New Covenant of Redemption has been made with us. For us that is why we do not baptize babies because a baby is still spiritually dead and has not learned the full graciousness of the Father yet. **Baptism does not save you it shows that you have been saved.**

You can see in this last part what is actually being declared at our Baptism, in this case, the son’s restoration to family and community.

²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

The Father makes a public confession of restoration, adoption, justification, redemption, glorification! – The *Ordo Salutis*.³

And they began to celebrate. - At this public confession the Father declares, it is done, we celebrate! There are to be no more argument about it, no condemnation as it is for us today who call Him Father – **“*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” (Rom. 8:1)**

Loved ones, this is what it means for you in here today. I hope, I mean I pray, that you have felt a little of what it means to be loved by God, for this is your story.

MP: To understand the JOY of God the Father over you when you came home AND that you saw what HE did to get you to come home and you understand a little better about what you received upon your return.

It also means if you are still in the world, pray that He opens your eyes to the works of Christ on your behalf, for there is a home waiting for you, pray that God brings you to your senses, pray that so that you may come and join your true family so that we may confess the glories of our Father together, forever.

³ <https://www.monergism.com/topics/ordo-salutis>



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PRAY

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that has Graciously loved you First, who establishes the path that brings you home.

Go in the name of the Son, that makes us aware of the love of the Father through His work of redemption that brings us home.

Go in the name and power of the HS, who brings us to our senses, who causes us to repent, and helps us give a testimony to others who are still lost.