Luke 15B

• Today we conclude Chapter 15 of Luke

• As we ended last week, we saw that
  
  o The Pharisees unable to see why God shows favor to sinners
  
  o Jesus teaching how sinners are a thing of value to God and worthy of being counted, of being found and restored
  
  o Of a story where a rebellious son longs to distance himself from a Father’s authority
  
  o And a patient father willing to grant the son his distance so He might ultimately preserve the relationship

• So we pick up in Chap 15 at that point...

Luke 15:13 “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.

Luke 15:14 “Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished.

Luke 15:15 “So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

Luke 15:16 “And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

• The son gathers his property together, squanders it, and then finds himself in ever increasing desperation, trying to work his way out of his predicament

  o Go back to something else I mentioned at the end of last week

  o I said that Adam’s fall in the garden was pictured in the way the young son rejected the authority of the father
    
    ▪ Let’s review that picture
    
    ▪ The effect of Adam’s sin was that man had placed an infinite separation between mankind and the Creator
• We could no longer be in His presence
• And we have inherited an evil heart that does not trust in God nor look to Him but only trusts in its own evil desires
  o And there were consequences for Adam’s rebellion against the Father
    ▪ He began to rely on himself rather than on Father
  o But the son made poor decisions when left to run his own life, according to his own desires
  o And then when his own resources ran out, the unexpected occurs
    ▪ The famine occurs
    ▪ The abundance of food disappears
    ▪ God produces a stress on the earth, a trial
    ▪ And in the testing and in the trials, the man is brought face to face with the consequences of his sin
  o Scripture tells us that we are enslaved by our sin
    ▪ We are in bondage to our sin, a slave to sin, Paul calls us
    ▪ Just like this prodigal son who has become a slave to some master
• And yet despite his hard work, he was not finding satisfaction
  o He’s cleaving to someone he believes can give him what he needs
  o He’s doing hard work
  o He’s doing everything he can in his power to make up for his mistakes and to correct for his errors
    ▪ Yet he still can’t seem to earn enough to make good
    ▪ He can’t get ahead
    ▪ And he’s still hungry
    ▪ He can’t find the kind of peace and fulfillment he needs, despite his hard work
• He’s absolutely desperate and without alternatives and seemingly without hope
  
  o This is the state of sinful men in the world

  • Men work their whole lives to work their way out of a fear of death and the desperation that sin creates
    
    • They long for an inner peace or satisfaction in life
    
    • But in our own work, we only fall farther behind
    
    • Because the wages of sin are death
    
    • Work just isn’t the answer to our problem
    
    • The answer is grace

  • And in this moment of desperation, something remarkable happened

Luke 15:17 “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!
Luke 15:18 ‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;
Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.”’

  • He came to his senses we’re told

    o Heautou – conscious, as in he became conscious

    o Just as Rom 2:4 tells us that the kindness of God leads you to repentance
      
      • As it was here, that the Father’s kindness is on the mind of the young man as he comes to his senses

      • Just as Paul explains our entry into faith by grace:

Titus 3:3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.
Titus 3:4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us

  o Upon the son’s return, the father went to an extreme to shield the son from public humiliation and scorn – he ran to meet him
• The Father protected his son against the shame by taking the shame upon himself
  o Just as Christ did the same for lost sinners the world over
• And so the son returns, and the Father welcomes him
  o And the Father places on the son are symbols of sonship for a son who has been restored
  o A robe, a ring, and sandals
  o The son has regained his entire claim to sonship with the father
    ▪ And what did the son do to earn it?
    ▪ Nothing of course
    ▪ He done nothing more than had a change in conscious, made a decision to repent
    ▪ And returned to the Father and expressed that repentance
    ▪ And the Father accepted him joyfully
• So as the earlier parables taught, the father is ready to celebrate
  o He throws a party
    ▪ And the celebration is the same celebration Jesus taught in the first two parable
    ▪ The joy of a repentant sinner
    ▪ A son restored
• But that’s only the first half of the story
  o Like we said, this is a story of two sons, not one
  o So now Jesus turns his attention to the other son who has been discussed sine the opening verses of the parable
Luke 15:25 ¶ “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

Luke 15:26 “And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be.

Luke 15:27 “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’

Luke 15:28 “But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him.

Luke 15:29 “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;

Luke 15:30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’

Luke 15:31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.

Luke 15:32 ‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”

• The older son is in the field
  o This is interesting, since we already know that this is a wealthy family with plenty of hired servants
  o As the sole remaining son, the older boy had little reason to invest his time working in the field
  o They would have had servants over other servants
    ▪ It gives a picture of a son working overtime to please his father
    ▪ Going overboard to show his faithfulness and his willingness to work hard to earn his father’s favor
    ▪ There would have been little other reason for him to be in the field
  o And he’s so far from the house and so far from the events of the family, that he has to ask a servant to bring him up to date on the family news
    ▪ He doesn’t seem to have a very close relationship with the father
    ▪ He asks what’s going on in my father’s house
• And when he learns that his father has shown grace and mercy and lovingkindness to his wayward son, he becomes angry
  o In some ways it’s an understandable reaction to us
  o We might share his anger at seeing someone receiving favor when they don’t deserve it
    ▪ Until we remember that we would want the same grace if the roles were reversed
    ▪ But the older son couldn’t understand that concept, because the older son didn’t need grace
    ▪ He had earned his father’s praise, he thought

• The son is so upset, he refuses to join the celebration
  o He won’t go into the Father’s house
  o He stays away pouting over the situation
  o He demands that the Father come to him
    ▪ And the father graciously comes near to hear his complaint
    ▪ And the older son says I have served you for years
    ▪ I have paid careful attention to all your commands
    ▪ Yet I never received any celebration for my effort
      ▪ You never prepared me a goat much less a calf
      ▪ But you celebrate with a man who used your wealth to buy prostitutes

• Did you notice some of the important details in that conversation?
  o The son wants a celebration for his effort
  o And had their been a celebration, he wanted the Father to host the party but the celebration would have been with his friends, not with the father himself
    ▪ In other words, He need the father to do things for him because he had earned them
• But there was no love, no shared joy, merely privilege earned

• Even the way he addressed the father in the moment was “Look!”
  • You don’t speak to the father that way
  • You say Father, I am here.
  • Or Speak, Father
  • Something respectful
    o And now he was angry because someone less deserving was receiving the Father’s love

• Then the father tells the older son, why are you complaining
  o Why do you feel shortchanged?
  o You always had access to all that I had
  o You could have received all that I could give you,
    ▪ You only had to come to me in love
    ▪ You can’t earn that love
  o But when the lost come to their senses, we have to celebrate

• Finally, to apply this parable to the world once again, do you see the connections?
  o Both these sons were sinners and in rebellion to the Father
    ▪ One was overt, obvious and unabashed
    ▪ The other was the hypocrite, the one who was determined to earn the favor he desired
    ▪ One was brought low and brought to his senses
    ▪ The other remained indifferent and unrepentant
    ▪ One returned to the Father with a new heart and a new desire to serve
    ▪ The other remained steadfastly proud and separated from the Father, demanding the Father come to him
• One is restored to sonship though deserving of judgment

• The other remains outside the family celebration though expecting to be rewarded for diligent service

• Jesus teaches this parable to illustrate not only what God will celebrate in the lost being found
  o But Jesus is also explaining why the Pharisees are not receiving Jesus’ message
    ▪ Why Jesus has turned his back on them and left them on the outside looking in
    ▪ And why the poor, destitute sinners and tax collectors – the ones who did have ears to hear – bring joy to heaven

• Luke includes Chapter 15 for us to explain how and why Jesus turns his back on the religious establishment
  o And why He found a receptive audience with the lowest in society
  o And having answered so clearly the basis for the Pharisee’s rejection of Jesus, Luke makes a significant shift at the end of Chapter 15
    ▪ He moves into an extended series of chapters looking almost exclusively at the disciples and his preparation of them for ministry
    ▪ It’s a wonderful series of chapters for us too on how we should approach our ministry on earth