

## Luke 15B

- Today we conclude Chapter 15 of Luke
- As we ended last week, we saw that
  - The Pharisees unable to see why God shows favor to sinners
  - Jesus teaching how sinners are a thing of value to God and worthy of being counted, of being found and restored
  - Of a story where a rebellious son longs to distance himself from a Father's authority
  - 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
  - Go back to something else I mentioned at the end of last week
  - 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
- And there were consequences for Adam's rebellion against the Father
  - He began to rely on himself rather than on Father
- But the son made poor decisions when left to run his own life, according to his own desires
- 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
- 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
  - He's cleaving to someone he believes can give him what he needs
  - He's doing hard work
  - 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
- 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
  - Heautou – conscious, as in he became conscious
  - 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

- 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
  - Just as Christ did the same for lost sinners the world over
- And so the son returns, and the Father welcomes him
  - And the Father places on the son are symbols of sonship for a son who has been restored
  - A robe, a ring, and sandals
  - 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
  - He throws a party
    - And the celebration is the same celebration Jesus taught in the first two parables
    - The joy of a repentant sinner
    - A son restored
- But that's only the first half of the story
  - Like we said, this is a story of two sons, not one
  - So now Jesus turns his attention to the other son who has been discussed since 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
  - This is interesting, since we already know that this is a wealthy family with plenty of hired servants
  - As the sole remaining son, the older boy had little reason to invest his time working in the field
  - 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
  - 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
  - In some ways it's an understandable reaction to us
  - 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
  - He won't go into the Father's house
  - He stays away pouting over the situation
  - 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?
  - The son wants a celebration for his effort
  - And had there 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
- 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
  - Why do you feel shortchanged?
  - You always had access to all that I had
  - 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
  - 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?
  - 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
  - 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
  - And why He found a receptive audience with the lowest in society
  - 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