

The lost son

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Date: 18 February 2018

[0:00] I was Luke 15. Talking about the lost son, or the prodigal son as some call him. Luke 15 from verse 11. Luke 15 has been called the Bible's lost and found department. Now they have them down at the railway station when you leave something on your seat. Looks like that man there left something earlier and had to come back and get it to retrieve it.

The lost and found department of the Bible where we see of course the lost coin and the lost sheep and here we see the lost son. And it starts in verse 11.

And he said, our Lord said, they saved two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of the goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

So he was the younger, verse 12. He wanted his share of the property. Now it really wasn't time to receive his share of the property.

As we know, it's when your parents die, you get, maybe if you're good, you get what they have willed to you. And he wanted his share of the property prematurely. Very presumptuous and demanding of him to make such a request.

[1:26] But what did the father do? The father divided his possessions, his wealth, to him. And verse 13. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country. And there wasted his substance with riotous living.

The younger son, he got his portion and he cashed it in, so to speak. And he went into this land far, far away. It says he took his journey into a far country, many miles away.

And he wasted his wealth with wild living, reckless living. He wasted his substance. It was just spent, just like that.

It's like you hear these people that win the cross lotto. You know, they get that windfall and only months later they've gone and wasted it all, spent it all. Not that I'm recommending doing cross lotto by any means.

Verse 14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty, severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

[2:37] There arose this mighty famine. This very severe famine in the land, and he began to be in want. Verse 14. When he had spent all, he had spent everything.

Everything was gone. He had nothing left in his pockets, as it were. He was at rock bottom. And then it says, what's more, that this mighty famine, this terrible, severe famine struck.

And then it says he began to be in want. He began to be in great need. He had nothing. Nothing to eat. Look at what's happened here.

We see the son no longer wants to be home. Give me, he says to his father.

He wanted to go and live for the moment. He wanted to be free. To live his life his own way. He wanted his share of the family's wealth, and he wanted it now.

[3:50] He wanted to get what he would ultimately have got. But he wanted it now. We're in Luke 15. He wants to cash it in.

And to treat his dad as if he were dead. It was quite an insult, in a way. What he wanted was quite out of the custom and out of what was really accepted.

Here's the prodigal. Full of his own selfish ideas. He wanted the bright lights. The big city. The far, far country. Now the grass is always greener.

On the other side. He wanted those bright lights. He wanted to go and live it up. Live the life that everyone would say that he's living the life that he's dreamt of.

But it's not long in this account that he finds that his so-called freedom gets him into very big trouble. Big trouble. We see, picking up the story, Luke 15, verse 15.

[5:02] He spent it all. He countered a great lack. In great need. Verse 15.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. And he sent him into his fields to feed swine. In this far country.

He joined himself. A citizen of that country. And the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. Sent to feed the pigs.

Not the choicest of jobs. And as a Hebrew, feeding pigs was a very unclean, demeaning thing. And really quite out of sync with his calling as part of the Hebrew nation to feed pigs.

Verse 16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. And no man gave unto him.

[6:12] He was so longing that he was longing to fill his belly with the pig food. He wanted to fill his stomach with the pods, the husks that the pigs were eating.

How low can you sink? What a picture of a man sinking to such a depth. Such a dreadful low spot. That he would be not only feeding the pigs in the pig pen. Can you imagine that in the muck and mire and the refuse of a pig pen?

That he wanted to stoop down and pick up what the pigs were grovelling in. And as the pigs were... Imagine the sound effects.

They're in that pig pen. The muck and mire, how filthy pigs are. Who's seen filthy pigs? Some people call people that.

[7:13] And it's probably an apt description for some people. But filthy pigs! There they were, grovelling in the pig pen. In the trough.

And he was so hungry that even what the pigs were eating, he got a bit of a hunger pains for it. You know, it's like we get those hunger pains when we drive past KFC.

And he had the smell of the pig food. And that smelled good to him right then. So verse 17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough to spare?

And I perish with hunger. Notice here verse 17. He came to himself. He came to himself. He came to himself.

At the lightbulb moment. What an idiot I am. When he came to his senses, he realised, What have I done? I'm dying here with hunger.

[8:20] I'm starving to death. When he came to himself. When he came to himself. He took a close look at himself. You know, he had a real good look in the mirror.

And thought, I don't like what I see. What I've become. The terrible condition that he was in. What a state he was in. How deplorable a condition.

And he thought back about his father in that homeland far, far away. Of his father, of his mother, of his home. And of his servants who gladly served him.

And he thought, even the servants are doing better than I am here. He looked at himself in the pig pen. He was scraping the bottom of the barrel.

He'd gone so as low as he could possibly go. He was broke. And his friends had deserted him. He was hungering evil pig slops.

[9:26] What a mess he was in, truly. And what a terrible mistake that he had made. Guilt overwhelmed him.

He was facing ruin and starvation. He'd hit rock bottom. A preacher said, How this preacher's sin. Sin is temporary madness. And the first step to God is to come to ourselves. He came to himself. He came to his senses. Sin is temporary madness. To leave the father. And to go into a far country. He came to himself.

And he realised what a dread mistake he had made. Perhaps as he came to himself. As he came to his senses. He thought about those changeable friends.

[10:31] Who were partying with him. Just earlier on. Those friends. You could picture it. That might have come to him.

As he had lots of money. To help him waste his money. Perhaps he thought about the parties. About the pleasure. About the prostitutes.

What a waste of time and money. It had been. And now he knew. How shallow. The life of sin is. It's a shallow life.

And he decided to do something about his condition. He came to himself. Our soul longs for food. Which the world cannot supply. He came to his senses.

Wait a minute. I don't have to starve out here. I have a father. A home. And he came to that realisation. That he was lost. Lost.

[11:28] Far. Far away. He was doomed. As you could picture it spiritually. He was exposed. His sin. His soul was naked.

He realised his need. To go to the father. Of course we know. It pictures for us. Of a lost soul. Realising.

That need. Of the father. And we see. The condition. Of the pig pen. Pictures for us. The consequences of sin.

The pain. The misery. The regret. The distress. Of living outside God's will. What a shallow. Shallow life. A pig pen.

Of a life. And verse 18. We read on. He says. As he came to his senses. As he came to himself. Verse 18. He says. I will rise.

[12:25] And go to my father. And I will say unto him. Father. I have sinned in heaven. And before thee. I will rise.

And go. To my father. Here he was. Down with the pigs. You can imagine. You know. In a farm setting.

You could picture it. Maybe I'm being a little imaginative here. But I'd imagine it was. Probably muddy. And boggy. And a bit of a quagmire. Of the mud.

And filth. Of a pig pen. And the. Pongy. Smell. Of it. You could. You know. If you could just. Kind of. Open up your senses. To think. What a pig pen would be like.

What it could be like. And here he was. Down in the depths. Maybe. Getting his boots. As it were. His sandals. Stuck in that mud. And really.

[13:20] Down in the pits. Of the pig pen. And he says. As he was there. Virtually on his knees. As it were. I will get up. I will rise.

I will arise. And go to my face. He'd hit. The depths. Of sin. Of a pig pen. And this word.

Where it says. I will arise. I will get up. It can. Literally mean. To raise up. From the dead. There's a sense of. Rising up. From the dead.

Of that. Resurrection. As it were. Of that coming to life. From death. So again. It's just. That. There's that. Word picture.

You could. Paint here. In that. Very phrase. I will arise. And go. I will get up. I will rise from the dead. As it were. And come to life. Verse 19.

[14:14] He goes on. As he says. Father I've sinned. I'm no more worthy. To be called. Thy son. Make me as one of thy. Hired servants. He says. I don't deserve this.

I don't deserve. To be called your son. Any longer. For what I have done. I'm not worthy. I'm willing to surrender. My. My. Place. As a son. And to be.

Just as one of your. Hired hands. I'm willing to surrender. And stop going. My own selfish ways. I'm willing to come to you. As a very. Much. A servant. So he'd rehearse that.

Which he was going to say. Verse 20. We read on. Verse 20. And he arose. And came. To his father. And he arose.

And came. To his father. Now this word. Came. Could be put. He was coming. To his father. So it's like. He. He came.

[15:12] But he was still. Kind of in that act. Of coming to. The father. It was like. He was still. On the. Journey. And it goes on.

But when. He was yet. A great way off. His father saw him. And had compassion. And ran. And fell on his neck. And kissed him. What a picture here.

Of a reception. Of this. Lost son. He was a great way off. He was yet. A great way off. The father saw him. And had compassion.

And ran. And fell on his neck. And kissed him. So we see here. That. The father. Again. We could picture that.

As representing. God. Our father. This father. Was filled with compassion. There was no hesitation.

[16:08] There was no. Holding back. Of his emotion. Of his love. Of his tenderness. And what does it say? The father.

What a great way off. The father saw him. The father was looking. His father was watching. His father was watching. For his return. His father was waiting. And ready.

And it says. He ran. And fell. On his neck. And kissed him. He threw his arms around him. And kissed him.

And this word. Where it says. Kissed him. And it's got a picture of. He ardently kissed him. It wasn't just a little. Peck on the cheek. He covered him with kisses.

[17:19] In a sense of. When it was a fervent. Reception. A fervent embrace. A fervent. Compassionate welcome. With tenderness. With fondness.

Now. Don't forget. This son. Smelled like a pig. He smelt like a pig.

Literally. He was dirty. Stinking like a pig. But. The father was filled with compassion. And he gave him a great big hug.

Great big big hug. Kissed him. Fervently. Fondly received him. What a picture that is. Of the father. Receiving the sinner. Of.

This. Father. Receiving his prodigal. His lost son. Pictures for us. The father God. Receiving. The sinner. As his son.

[18:16] Receiving him. Into. Fellowship. He said. I will arise. And go to my father. There's a. There's a sense of.

Repenting here. That he was going to. Rise up from where he was. I have sinned. I have sinned. Against heaven. And before thee.

I am no more worthy. No more worthy. And it's like those two. That went to pray. Oh. I thank you God. That I look like that man.

And he says. Oh. God be merciful to me. Sinner. God be merciful to me. Sinner. I am no more worthy. To be called thy son. The father was looking.

For his son's return. Looking. Looking with loving. Longing. With forgiveness. Even then. And he runs. Towards the son. You know.

[19:16] God runs. Towards us. Doesn't he? He runs. To us. As he sees us. Turning from. Our way. To him.

He runs. He runs to us. To receive us. And embrace us. Rejoicing. When we do. God is eager. To forgive sin. Can we just picture it again.

Just to. Paint this word picture. Of what it all. Looked like. On that day. While he was still. A long way off. The father had been longing. For his return.

For many years. For his son. Well we don't know. The time span. But it could have been. A long time. He was longing. For his son. And his eyes. Often looked down that road.

Far down the road. To that far country. To the horizon. You could picture it. Father recognized him. When he was far off. That's my son.

[20:11] He still knew. What he looked like. He wanted to. Run to him. As compassion. Flooded his heart. Bearing the pain. And hurt. Of rejection. And the old man.

Gets up. And begins to run. To his son. On one side. Is the son. Rehearsing his speech. With fear. And trepidation. He's rehearsed. What he was going to say. With trepidation.

That father. Will not receive him. He could well. Have just said. No. I've washed my hands. Of you. I'm going to have.

Nothing more. To do with you. And. I would expect. In the. The customs. Of the day. That. Could have been the case. That could have been. Lawfully. He. He's been paid off. He's. Got the inheritance. I'll disown him.

[21:10] But no. This father. Pictures the father. Heart of God. Doesn't he? The father. The father. Heart of God. And. Here is the son. Moving at this. Uncertain. Uncertain pace.

You could picture it. As maybe he was shuffling. His feet. Maybe he was. Kind of kicking the cam. Down the road. Thinking. Oh. What am I going to say. To this man. To my father. Up.

He was. Just. Just. Rehearsing. And rehearsing. The words. That he was going to say. And on the other side. Is the father. My son. I can see my son. That's him.

And we see him running. His robes. Flowing behind him. It would have been. Perhaps. Somewhat. Undefficient. For the father. To be running. with his robes flowing he hurries to his son whom he longed for and as he saw him he felt compassion he ran he embraced him and kissed him fervently or many times is the sense of the Greek here that is a fervent and many times he throws his arm around him in this happy embrace as that sign of welcome and love now the son thinks will his father accept him if he knows the extent of it all if he just knew what I did with all that money how I wasted it what I spent it on and he knew he was lousy he was a good for nothing he had rehearsed his speech about sin about his lack of worthiness but the father stops him he doesn't get a chance to say much here we see in verse 21 and the son said unto him father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and I'm no more worthy to be called thy son verse 22 the father just cuts what else he was going to say he says that verse 22 we pick it up again but the father said to his servants bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet now the meanings here of these various components a show of honour to the son we see the robe the ring the shoes bring out the robe the best go through my wardrobe and get the very best of my garments the robe it was a special honour to have a robe of such a kind the best robe those robes speak of very much of honour

Isaiah 61 verse 3 tells us of the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness we see the long robes worn by kings and priests and people of rank and the redeemed of the Lord the robe was a very special honour that the father bestowed then we see the ring the ring showed commitment and belonging to the family you know some would have had a signet a what do they call it when you you make a a mould in the wax a seal that had the family crest or you know such things it showed a belonging to the family a commitment to the family and then the shoes again it showed acceptance into the family and sonship the ring and the sandals meant that he was a free man because he had no shoes or sandals so apparently so the shoes spoke of and then he goes on the father goes on of further honour to bestow verse 23 he says and bring here the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry bring it here the fatted calf let's have a feast bring out the very best calf this would have been something kept for those special occasions you know maybe once in a lifetime that you have the very best of the best my son's come home

[25:30] I want him to have the very best verse 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again and he was lost and is found and they began to be merry this my son was dead he was a dead man he was to go on but he has come to life again he's come to life again and they began to be joyful and happy and celebrate notice here in reflecting further on this part here what the father's love bring and we can think on this as as believers here today that we know the father's love we know we've known the pig pen but we've come to the father that have trusted him and we see pictured here many dimensions of the father's love for example forgiveness forgiveness forgiveness this man had hit the pits he had he had really hit rock bottom he'd been down in the pits of sin as it were and yet

God's love pictured by the father is total it's absolute God gets excited he's watching for us and he's welcoming us when we come to him with open arms even though we stink as it were and