

# The Lost Son

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[0:00] Luke 15 And we hear here about the son who was lost.

Who's ever lost something? That's annoying, isn't it? I'm always losing things. But how awful it would be to lose your son. This is what happened to his father. In Luke 15, from verse 11, and we'll read some verses and then comment.

So, from verse 11, and he said, A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.

And he divided unto him his living. And not many days after, the youngest son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

Now, when it says he gathered it all together, the sense is that he cashed it in. Basically, he got what he would have been due when the father was to die, and he cashed it all in, all that money.

[1:22] So, he was loaded. He had heaps of dollars. He'd taken all the inheritance that normally he should have waited for his father to die to pass on. But this man, this younger son, he was loaded with all this cash.

Everything that he got given, he hopped it, he sold it, and got the money for it. And really, in doing this, he offended the whole community of his day, the whole village. This was a shocking thing to do, to take his father's inheritance early and then to liquidate it, to turn it into cash.

What an insult to his family's inheritance, to his family's honour. What an insult to his father that he would do that. Really, he was kind of saying, treating his father as if he was dead to do such a thing. And here's this kid. He turns the family's ancestral land into quick cash, and he takes off into a distant country. And his doing this, while his father was still living and in good health, it would have shocked and horrified the whole village.

His name was Mud from then on. He would have wanted to go back to that village. That was a shameful thing that he did. And Hebrews 11.25 talks about the pleasures of sin for a season.

[2:27] This is what this man did. He wanted to have some pleasure, some short-term pleasure, some pleasures of sin for a season, for a short time. And we see some of the things that happen when a man turns his back on God's way.

And we see in Act 1, you could say, man leaving God. This man, the loser, the first character of our story, and the sinner's life leads to wandering. We see this man, he wandered.

He went on a journey into a far land, a land far away, in search of happiness and love, really leaving it behind. When he left his father's home, he actually left the love and happiness that he could have had.

And it's like Adam in the garden, isn't it? He left God's presence. He disobeyed. He disobeyed God. And he turned his back. He lost that sweet communion, that sweet presence, that sweet intimate fellowship, that closeness with the Father.

This guy, he just went bush. He just went walkabout. He just went and shot through. It's like some people might think of doing, you know, going and shooting through. And really, he was just wandering aimlessly.

[3:35] That's what sin will lead to. It'll lead to wandering and going astray. If you've got questions, maybe you could ask David there. Wandering. That's what sin can lead to. And secondly, wasting.

What a waste. Here he was. He wasted his wealth. He wasted it in living it up. He lifted up big time, yeah. He had lots of cash. He splashed it around. He had lots of mates when he had the cash.

And he was wasting it in wild living, in riotous living, it says. And in fact, the word prodigal means riotous. It means wasteful. This is what prodigal means. And I've only just learned that today.

Wasting.

He was a waster. He wasted his time. He wasted his treasures. He wasted his talents. And when tough times come, he really had nothing to hang on to. With that wild living, he'd lost the Father's presence.

He'd lost the peace. He'd lost the purpose that he could have had. And he got out of sync with what the Father would have wanted for him. And like that too with sin, isn't it? That we lose God's peace. [4:33] We lose God's presence. We lose God's plan for our life. And all that he had left was a great emptiness. G'day. All he had left was a great emptiness. This man, the lost son.

And he had gone as low as he could go. Down. He was in the pits. He went to the pig pen. Literally. And all he was left with was pigs and pods. He was feeding the pigs. And he was feeding the pigs with this pig swill.

These pods that they used to feed to the pigs of the day. What a shameful thing it was. A shame job. But this boy, this younger son, he'd lifted up so high and mighty in the Father's house where he had everything.

He was pretty rich and well to do. He had everything done for him as the son of the Father. And here he was now, just a servant. Just wasting. And so he was wandering.

He was wasting. And he was wanting. He was wanting. In verse 14, it says here, Luke 15. And when he had spent all, there arose a great famine. A mighty famine in that land.

[5:31] And he began to be in want. Now some have commented on this that maybe it could have taken several years. He might have been away several years because for him to get a third of the inheritance of the wealth of his family, it could have taken a few years for him to blow that money.

But now it was all gone. Everything that he'd been given, that he'd cashed in, was spent up. It was all gone. He had nothing left. He had empty pockets. And he had spent everything. And now what? A terrible famine comes. It struck the country. He got hungry. There was a great famine. No food. No farming. You know, the staple kind of way of making money off the day and time.

He got desperate. And he ended up down at the pig pen. He began to be in need. And the only job he could find was feeding pigs. You know, it wasn't the kind of best job of the day, I'd imagine, but it was the only job that he could get at that time.

And he was desperate. And sin is like that. Sin does not satisfy. Sin is something that you've got a desperation. You've got a need for satisfaction. But there's something missing.

[6:34] And that's what happens with sin. You'll end up wondering. You'll end up wasting. You'll end up wanting because it doesn't satisfy. There's something more. There's something missing. There's that empty vacuum inside a man, inside a woman, in a heart that only Christ can fill.

That emptiness, that void that only Jesus can take that place within. And the Lord Jesus says, seek and you will find. What you're really searching for, what we're really needing, what we're really having to find, is that which he can give to us.

He says in Jeremiah, it says, if you shall find me, if you shall search for me with all your heart. Isn't that an encouragement? But, you know, if you're really searching tonight, he says, if you're searching, you can find me.

If you can search for me, seek me with all your heart. He says, I will be found of you. And God is really the source of all good gifts. Here was this joker, this lad.

He had everything laid on in the Father's house and he just went and blew it. He went and blew everything down at the pig pen. He blew everything that he had and wasted it.

[7:44] And yet, God is the source of all good gifts. The Father is the source of all good gifts, as it says in James 1, verse 17. And from verse 15, it goes on. The story goes on.

Here he was. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. And he sent him into his fields to feed the swine. And he would, fainter, fill his belly with the husks. He really wanted to fill his belly with the husks, with these seed pods that the pigs used to get fed, the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.

So here was this man. He really hit rock bottom. You know, he couldn't go any lower, really. He spent everything. He often longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating.

And no one was giving him anything. He didn't get anything. Not a skerrick. You know, he was envious of the pigs. They were getting fed better than he was. And he was scraping, really, the bottom of the barrel.

He was broke, and his friends had deserted him. He'd blown all the cash, and his friends had deserted him. And really, that's the consequences of sin. Sin is going to lead to regret. It's going to lead to shame.

[8:46] It's going to lead to distress and pain and shame. It's going to leave you empty inside and living outside of God's will.

And this is where this man got to this point. He hit rock bottom. And verse 17, the story goes on. It says he came to himself.

It's got the sense that he came to his senses. He says, verse 18, The light went on for this young man.

The light went on. There was a change. He came to his senses. He realized what an idiot he was. He realized what a fool he was. And really, sin is a kind of madness. Sin is really a kind of madness because it's foolishly rejecting your only hope.

It's like the Bible says, A fool has said in his heart, there is no God. And really, it's a foolish thing to choose sin's path instead of choosing Christ. And so the wonderful change now in our story is as a significant change happens from this point.

[10:13] There's a change from the inside out. As he comes to his senses, as he realizes where he's at, what a foolish decision he's made. And becoming a Christian is a sensible thing to do.

It's stepping into a new dimension. And if you're not a Christian, you're not fully sensible, really. You're really missing out on something that makes life make sense. It makes it all, puts all the jigsaw puzzle together.

And he remembered what he once had. He remembered way back. And he's thinking, wow, the servants in my home, they had it better than me. My father's hired men. They had more than enough food.

But here am I dying with hunger. I will get up and go to my father. And will say to him, father, I've sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer deserving to be called your son.

Make me as one of your hired men. So we've seen scene one. The lost son. We've seen scene one. The loser, man leaving God.

[11:12] And what the sinner's life brings. A wandering. A wasting. And what was the third one? It's a troll when you have things.

A wandering and a wasting and a wanting. Just an emptiness. Just a hopelessness. And then we see scene two. God loving man. We see God loving man.

And we see the second great character in this story is the lover of our soul. We see the loser. We see the lover. We see God the father. The one who loves the unlovely.

The unlovely really. The one who is undeserving of nothing really at all. And the loser's search for love and happiness really ended back. Right back at home.

In verse 20. And he arose. And he came to his father. 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.

[12:10] It's wonderful this story. At this point here you're seeing the account. The amazing compassion. You know the gripping nature of this account here. While he was still a long way off.

His father saw him. Here it was. It was years after. Likely some. Certainly a considerable time for him to have blown the money. He'd gone into a far country. So it was some distance.

Some travel. To him to go there and come back. And the father here. In the story. He's longing.

He's looking. He's scanning the horizon. He's searching. Looking for the prodigal.

He's searching. Looking for the lost son. His eyes are scanning the road. Looking far down the road. And the father recognized him. Whoa. It's my son.

It's my son. I can see him. He could see his son. And immediately compassion floods his heart. The love for his son. The love for his own son. It floods his heart. It buries that pain.

[13:05] That feeling of rejection. That feeling of hurt. That feeling of. Wow. He's really done me wrong. He's really fouled up. This son of mine. And he deserves nothing.

Really. That was all. Away. From him. As he thought. Of the compassion of his son. He's coming back. He's coming back home. And as he recognized him.

As he recognized. It's my son. It's my son. Compassion floods his heart. And. He gets up. This man. Perhaps an older man. And.

Certainly older than the son. Of course. And he begins to run. To his son. Begins to run. Now I don't know whether it was that. Whether they put the chariots of fire theme music on. As he was running. But you know. It would have been an amazing. Effort. Olympic feat. I'm sure that he wouldn't have run. Sort of. Casually. He would have really sprinted. And raced down there.

[14:00] To get to his son. It was something that was. You know. He would have put his energy in. I'd imagine. As you could kind of picture it. But here. On the one side is the son. Maybe. You know. Kicking a stone or two along the path.

Feeling pretty shameful. Pretty embarrassed. And maybe wondering. What is my father going to tell me. When I get there. Rehearsing his speech. Thinking about. What an idiot he was. And how he wanted to.

Really. Say look. Just find me a little. A little corner where the servants sit. And I'll be happy. You know. Dad. I don't deserve anything. Don't. I don't. I don't expect anything really.

And here he was. As he goes back. Moving at maybe an uncertain pace. In fear and trepidation. As he got closer and closer. And on the other side. Is the father running.

Running. His robes flowing behind him. And just. You know. Stretching forth to. To break the tape. As it were. And he hurries to his son. Whom he is longing for. He's wanting to be with.

[14:58] And his father saw him. Felt compassion. He ran. And embraced him. And he kissed him. And it's got the sense of. You know. The welcome. The fervent welcome. And it's got the sense of.

Of many times. Of a fervent. Embrace. Of a great. Compassionate. Loving embrace. With his father. That was how. The father welcomed the son back.

You know. It wasn't just some kind of. You know. Pat on the back. Oh. How are you going? It was. Wow. It's great to have you home son. And. Yeah. It's just really. He just wanted to embrace him. And hug him. And verse 21. And the son said unto him. Father. He started to. Recount. What he rehearsed to say. Father. I've sinned against. Heaven.

And in thy sight. And I'm no more worthy. To be called thy son. And the father. He just throws his arm around him. In this happy embrace. He just kisses him. As a sign of welcome and love. He was this son.

[15:51] Stinking like a pig. Maybe he would have. Looked like a pig. By the time. You know. Shoeless. And you know. Just. Just in the pig pen. In the muck. You know. Maybe pretty skinny.

Had a good feed. For a long time. And the son thinks. Would the father accept him. When he knows the full extent. Of it all. Maybe he was going to tell him. Exactly how he'd spent. All that cash that he had.

And he begins his rehearsed speech. To talk about his sin. His lack of unworth. His lack of worthiness. But the father stops him. He says. Son. It's okay.

Verse 22. But the father said to his servants. It just cuts him short. He says. Servants. Servants. Come over here. He would have rung his bell. Or whatever he did. To get the servants. Scarpering. To come to his bidding. And he says. Servants. Bring forth the best robe. And put it on him. And put a ring on his hand. And shoes on his feet.

[16:45] And bring here the fatted calf. And kill it. And let us eat. And be merry. For this my son. Was dead. And is alive. Again.

He was lost. And is found. And they began to be merry. So we see in here. What the sinner's life brings. All of those things we talked about. The wasting.

The wandering. The going astray. And how we see. What the father's love brings. What the father's love brings. When we don't deserve. A scarp of it. Not a. Not an inch of it.

Not a sliver of it. He comes. And he gives it. In full. And abandon. You know. You could say really. That. This word prodigal son. You could say the father was prodigal too.

Because you could. You could interpret the word prodigal. To mean extravagant. As he was a waster. The son. The prodigal. The son. Was a waster. He was extravagant.

[17:40] With his waste. But the father was prodigal. He was extravagant. With his love. He was extravagant. With his love. And we can. Think of. How that pictures for us. The father.

He's extravagant. With his love to us. With his embrace. With his welcome. Think of what the father's love brings. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. What a delight. What a joy. To know. Every bad thing.

I've ever done. Even thought. Or considered. To do. It's gone. It's taken. It's forgiven. It's. Cleared from his memory banks. For eternity.

And. The father is forgiven. It's total. It's absolute love. God gets excited. When he hears someone. Come to his senses. And turn around.

And come to him. What a picture. Of his welcome. As he gets excited. With open arms. He tenderly receives us. It's like one. Preacher. Puts it. One preacher.

[18:36] Said. Grace. Is a five letter word. It's spelled. J. E. S. U. S. It's wonderful.

Isn't it? To think. Grace. Is Jesus. It's who he is. He's full of grace. He is grace. He's full of grace and truth. He is. Grace. Personified. The unmerited.

Undeserved. The unlimited. Favor of God. Towards the undeserving. It's a free gift. A free gift. And Micah 7 verse 18. It says. That God delights.

In showing mercy. He delights in it. And that's the kind of delight. I would imagine. You know. The beaming. Face of the father. As the prodigal son. Came home. What the.

You know. He would have just been. You know. Ear to ear. Smiling. Wow. Son. You know. He would have just been ecstatic. With that extravagant. Love. That welcome.

[19:30] And that's what God does for us. In Micah 7 verse 18. He delights to show mercy. And. Repentance. Is pictured here too. In the story.

Repentance. It's not.

Us pleading with God. For a second chance. So that we can pay off our debt. And keep our dignity. Which is what the kind of. The son was kind of aiming to do.

Wasn't it? You know. I'll be a servant. I'll just work in the fields. And pay off what I kind of. Owe. In effect. Some people think. That's what. Becoming a Christian is.

It's. Being a good person. Trying really really hard. To. To not swear. To. To try to come to church. And. Put on a face. And. Try to be. Nice.

And. Pray. Read your bible. Try to. Work. Good enough. And be good enough. And work hard enough. That you can deserve. God's forgiveness. That you can deserve. God's holy heaven.

[20:24] By anything that you can do. You're wrong. Don't even try. Amen. Don't even try. To make heaven. By your own effort. It's by his effort.

It's by his work. It's by his blood. By his cross. By his death. On our behalf. His sacrifice for you. That we can have heaven. It's all of his doing. It's our collapsing.

On mercy. Alone. That's what the son had to do. He had to come to his knees. And say. Father. I've sinned. Against heaven. And in thy sight. I'm not worthy. Of anything.

That you can give to me. And. Then the father says. Quickly. Quickly. Servants. Come. Come. Bring. All the good stuff. For this one. He's come home.

And he's my son. He's my son. Now the father. He says. Quickly. Bring the best robe. Bring the best robe. And put it on him. Put a ring on his face. Finger.

[21:18] Sandals on his feet. Bring the fatted calf. And kill it. Let us eat. And rejoice. For this son of mine. He was dead. And he has come to life again.

He. Was lost. And has been found. And they began to celebrate. You know. It says in the context here. How the angels in heaven. They rejoice over one sinner.

That repents. We can make heaven rejoice tonight. As you trust him. For that first time. As you receive salvation. For time and eternity. The angels will rejoice.

In acknowledgement. Of that. They'll acknowledge that. Christ has died. For your sin. And you've received that gift. Personally. As we confess our sins.

He forgives us. He cleanses us. He. Welcomes us. So. Just to. Think. Just to. Capture here. What the father's.

[22:15] Love means. The father's love. The father's welcome. It means fulfillment. There's a lot of talk about fulfillment. And. I don't mean to. Dwell on that. As. As the be all and end all.

But people are looking for fulfillment. We all want fulfillment. We want to feel fulfilled. We want to feel like. Yeah. I've. I've got something that's meaningful. And real. And God freely gives us everything we need.

Though we don't deserve it. The father's joy. That was fulfillment. To see the father's face. To see the welcome. To receive it. His embrace. The fulfillment of that. Look at the things that the son received.

They're all meaningful. They all signify things. For example. The best robe. It was the best. You know. The father. Or the servants would have. Known what was the best robe.

In the father's wardrobe. So to speak. They'd have known which was the very best robe. That was the one the son got. The very best. And the father. In the story. He honors the son.

[23:12] Who had dishonored himself. He honored the son. And the robe means a sign of position. It was a sign of trust. It was a special recognition.

That the father had. Granted him a position of trust. It granted him. A. A worthy position. In the family. And then the second thing was the ring.

The ring that the son received. The father lavished on the boy. A sign of his love and wealth. The ring represented a sign of love. A sign of wealth.

A sign of authority. It was a mark of honor. And of dignity. For him to receive a ring. You know. In those days. When they had like wax seals. And you know. Parchment and what not.

And they. You. Make the wax melt. And press the ring into the wax. As a kind of signature. And. One would press the. Signet ring.

[24:06] Into the. Family seal.