

# For the One who Ran Away

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, if you've got a Bible, go to Luke chapter 15.

Luke chapter 15 is where we're going to be this evening. This is our second week in a new series that we started just a couple of weeks ago. Called For the One. For the One.

And what we're looking at is how Jesus is for the one that no one else is after. That no one else is for. Jesus is for the one that no one else loves.

He's for the one that everyone else would forget. He's for the one that those have rejected. We looked at the very first week to kind of kick this series off. At the parable of the lost sheep.

Which was at the beginning of Luke chapter 15. How Jesus is the kind of shepherd that will leave the 99 and go after the one. That's the kind of savior he is.

[ 1 : 06 ] That's the kind of shepherd he is. He cares about the one. And guess what? You are the one. It's very personal and very real. You are the one.

I am the one that Jesus goes after and cares for. And so we're looking at this because it does several things to look at this throughout the ministry of Jesus.

It shows us the heart of God. It teaches us about what Jesus is all about. What the kingdom of God is all about. And the reason we're doing this series is because this is at the very core of our culture here at Faith Family.

Is we want to be a church for the one. For those that feel like they don't belong. Listen. You belong here. This is where the grace of God welcomes you home.

And so let's look here at Luke chapter 15 as we continue this. There's actually a series of parables that Jesus teaches here. And we're going to look at the third one. It's the longest one.

[ 2 : 03 ] And probably the most familiar one to you. It's the parable of the prodigal son. Which is a very unfortunate name because it's actually the prodigal sons. And the focus of the story really isn't even about the sons.

It's about the father. But that's the sermon before we ever get into the sermon. So let's stand and read God's word. Luke chapter 15. If you're able to stand, please do as we honor the reading of God's word and recognize its authority.

Look at Luke chapter 15 and verse 11. Jesus said there was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the property that's coming to me. And he divided his property between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey into a far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living.

And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country. And he began to be in need. And so he went and he hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into the fields to feed pigs.

[ 3 : 14 ] And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate. And no one gave him anything. 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. I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Treat me as one of your hired servants. 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. 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 father said to his servants, Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him.

Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate. For this, my son was dead and is alive again.

[ 4 : 34 ] He was lost and he's found. And they began to celebrate. Now his older son was in the field and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, Your brother has come and your father has killed the fattened calf because he's received him back safe and sound.

But he was angry and he refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him. But he answered his father, Look, these many years I've served you, I've never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends.

But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him. And he said to him, Son, you're always with me and all that is mine is yours. It is fitting to celebrate and be glad. For this, your brother was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.

[ 5 : 51 ] I don't know how many times I've read that story. I still can't keep the emotion back. What a beautiful picture of the compassion of our Savior. Will you pray with me?

God, help us as we enter into your word. Strip off any familiarity we have with this text. Let us learn afresh and experience anew the beautiful grace of your kingdom that is found here.

Oh God, I pray that you would give us eyes to see your kingdom in this moment. Not as the world thinks it is, but as it has been revealed.

So invade this place and teach us once again how you are for the one. In Jesus' name I pray and God's people said, Amen. Amen. You can be seated.

Well, his nickname was the Glass Man, but his real name was Charles VI. Charles was actually the king of France back in the 14th century and he had this constant and debilitating fear.

[ 6 : 58 ] Charles was constantly afraid of breaking. You see, Charles convinced himself that he was made of glass. Now, before you laugh at him or think that he's strange, don't dismiss it.

He was actually struggling with a real mental disorder. In fact, it was something that many people in Europe in the 15th and 16th century struggled from and so this was a real condition that he fought. He thought he was made of glass and that forced him because he was obsessed with it to do some very strange things. For example, he refused to go outside on windy days because he was afraid that the wind might crack him.

He was terrified of going down steps because he was afraid that he might fall and shatter. When he actually would go out in public, he would have some of his guards go out before him and clear a wide path for fear that he might bump up against someone and be shattered.

He would stay in his room for long periods of time, motionless, afraid to move. They had to wrap him in blankets and make special clothes with these irons, the iron rods that would protect his body from breaking.

[ 8 : 14 ] Listen to me. I want you to picture that. That's how Charles lived every day of his life. Terrified at the idea that he would break. Can you imagine living that way?

Watching every single move you make, cautious to every step you take, guarded around anybody that you meet for fear of being broken. See, part of the reason why we don't need to make fun or laugh at Charles is because we're just like him.

Everybody in this room to one degree or another is terrified of being broken. And I don't mean that you actually think you're made with glass, but that you walk around guarded, protected, trying to maintain or protect an image.

Who, me? Oh, I'm fine. I'm fine. There's nothing wrong with me. Nothing here. Carry on. We all have that image we want to maintain. We don't want to come across as broken people.

I remember an article I read one time that was talking about what celebrities feared the most. And there was some very interesting answers. Johnny Depp said he was afraid the most of clowns, which, let's be honest, is a little ironic that he would be afraid of clowns.

[ 9 : 29 ] Anyways, you'll get that later. Matthew McConaughey, all right, all right, all right. He was afraid of dark tunnels. Nicole Kidman was afraid of butterflies. I don't really understand that one.

Billy Bob Thornton was afraid of old furniture. And Paris Hilton was afraid of, quote, becoming an old woman. And it wasn't the fear of getting old that captured my attention in this article.

It was why Paris Hilton is afraid of getting old. Here's what Paris said, quote, don't shoot the messenger. She said, I can't imagine being a 70-year-old woman. Because if you're a 70-year-old woman, then you're like not hot. Don't shoot the messenger. I guess the best thing you could hope for is to be the hottest 70-year-old woman of all the 70-year-old women, close quote.

Now, again, I dismissed, as you probably do, that quote as just being a stuck-up celebrity. But my point is that we all want the same thing. Listen, all Paris Hilton is trying to protect is an image. [10:39] And so are we. Now, our image might not quite be like what she wants to protect. Maybe it is. Maybe for you it is the image of attraction that you're trying to protect. And you would never want anybody to ever see you without makeup or not dressed up.

Like, you've got to portray that image, I'm getting close to some people, all right, of attraction. Or maybe it's the image of respect with your coworkers. Like, you want to do everything you can to gain that respect with them.

Some of you may want to give off the image of having money and that you've done well and that you're affluent. Or maybe you just don't ever want anybody to see you cry or broken in that way. Maybe you want just all the other Christians at church to make them think that you've got it spiritually all together. Me and God are tight. There's no issues in my spiritual life.

But the last thing most of us want anybody to see is us broken. See, we're just like Charles. We're just like Paris Hilton.

[11:42] Sorry. We want to protect an image. We don't want to appear broken. Now, lean in for just a moment because it's odd to me.

By the way, I'm preaching to myself. It's odd to me why most Christians want to try to keep it all together and yet Jesus goes after the ones that don't.

Are you listening? Most Christians want to give off the image of everything is fine and Jesus goes after the ones in which everything's not fine.

Do you remember the context of Luke chapter 15 that we looked at a few weeks ago? Well, look back in verse 1 of chapter 15. This is the context that sets off this whole series of stories.

Jesus says, now tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to him and the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

[12:50] Keep in mind, faith family, that in the ancient Near East, this is a culture and there are other cultures like this today, more in Eastern cultures. They're cultures of shame and honor and the absolute worst thing you could ever do is bring shame upon yourself or bring shame upon your family.

That is the worst thing that could possibly happen and yet in the eyes of the Pharisees, Jesus is bringing shame on himself. I mean, this is the worst thing he could do.

He's doing something totally disgraceful, humiliating. Jesus is humiliating his ministry. He's humiliating the Jewish people. He's humiliating the Jewish law.

Paul, why? Because he receives sinners. He actually hangs out with people like this. You know, the broken, the people that don't have it all together, the screw-ups and the ragamuffins.

He's receiving them and the Pharisees can't wrap their minds around this. Can you believe this guy does this? And it's out of that context that Jesus tells three parables.

[13:56] We looked at the first one two weeks ago, the parable of the lost sheep. And now we're going to look at the parable of what you could really call the lost son that might be more appropriate than the prodigal.

And notice how the parable, notice how the story starts, verse 11. And Jesus said, there was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the property.

Notice here, that is coming to me. It's not mine now, but it's coming to me and I want it now. And he divided his property between them.

First of all, this is a disgraceful request. And I know some of you have studied this before and you understand that what the younger son is doing here is absolutely humiliating and disgraceful.

It is shameful, it is dishonoring, it's rude, it's appalling, and there's at least three reasons why to make such a request is totally disgraceful.

[14:56] First, is that he's disrespecting the family order. Come on, you know this, those of you that studied the Bible very much. In the ancient Near East, which brother gets the inheritance or at

least the majority of it?

The older one, that's right. So here you have the younger one who's asking for his inheritance before his older brother gets it. And that is by asking this first, he's disrespecting the entire family structure of the ancient Near East.

Not only that, number two, he's devaluing the family land. Listen to me, faith family, in the ancient Near East, land was everything. They're not leaving their kids fully funded 401ks.

They're leaving their kids, they're leaving their family what? Land! And so to sell off part of this land now is not only decreasing the status of the land, it's decreasing the status of his father.

This family is going down in status because they have less land. Thirdly, he disgraces his father's name. Again, you notice the phrase the inheritance that was coming to him, meaning what?

[16:12] You don't get the inheritance until your father dies. In other words, the son is essentially saying not only do I not want to be a part of this family, not only do I want to be out from underneath your authority, not only do I want to run my own life, I wish you were dead.

I want my inheritance now. And this context is a Gentile or Jewish family? Jewish. And what was one of the Ten Commandments?

Honor. Your father and mother. This is about as disgraceful as it gets. This request, I mean, I'm trying to get you into the context where you would feel how it would have felt to have been a part of it.

The Pharisees are like, who would make such a request like this? This is humiliating. This is shameful. No one would rebel against their father like this.

And as if it wasn't bad enough to disgrace his family by this request, notice how it gets worse. Verse 13. Not many days later.

[17:23] Not many days later. So that's how long? Not many days later. We're coming back to that. The younger son gathered all that he had, took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered it in reckless living.

Do you see why that's worse? Lean in, faith family. It is one thing to ask for your inheritance early. It's another to squander it in a matter of days.

You just took everything your father and his father and his father worked hard for to gain and grow and protect, and you squandered it in a few days.

I mean, I want you to enter into the emotion of this, and I want you to imagine, and maybe some of you, it doesn't take you long to imagine something like this. I want you to imagine that your father worked like 50 years.

He worked so hard, dirt underneath his fingertips, like he was a hard worker for years and years and years and years and years. And by God's grace and his hard work, he gathered up a pretty nice fortune.

[18:32] And one of your siblings took everything your father had worked for for years and blew it in one night at Mystic Lake. Now, you may laugh at the Mystic Lake comment, but listen, as a sibling, would you not be furious?

It took our father years, years to gather that, and you just squandered it away like it was nothing. You have the audacity to make this request, and then you make it worse by squandering it all with reckless living.

Am I getting a little passionate here? It's because I want you to feel this. I'm just glad this thing's met of metal so I can't break it, all right? It may not be the last time it gets punched.

It gets worse as if the request wasn't bad enough, as if the reckless living isn't bad enough. Look at verse 14. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, so this is a Gentile country, who sent him into the fields to feed pigs.

[19:46] And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. This is quite the fall. Are you tracking with me?

Listen, listen, listen. He has the audacity to make the request. That's bad enough. And then he blows it in a few days with reckless living. And as if that wasn't bad enough, guess where he is now?

He is in the lowest of lows, in the lowest of lows. What is that? He's in a foreign land with Gentile people eating with pigs, which is the most unclean animal in the Old Testament.

Like, at this point, I can't even imagine how the Pharisees are reacting. This is the biggest loser on the planet. There isn't a lower form of loser.

As Randy Travis would sing, this is a better class of losers right here. If you don't know what Randy Travis is, shame on you, all right? He's in a better class of losers. This is the most disgraceful thing anybody could do in the ancient Near East.

[ 20 : 56 ] Now, let's stop. Let's stop. Who is this a description of? Come on. You don't need a PhD in theology or New Testament to figure this out. This description of the lost son takes us back to verse 1.

Look at it again. Now, the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. This is who this lost son is. This is the sinner, the reckless person, the one that has squandered their life away and Jesus is receiving them.

And what is this a description of? It's a description of their life. These sinners, these tax collectors, these prostitutes that Jesus is eating with and receiving, these are the people that have lived disgracefully.

They've dishonored God. They've dishonored the law of God. They've wanted independence from God. They took their life and their resources and the things that God had given them. They squandered it on themselves.

They pursued their own pleasures. These are people who loved the things of the world more than they loved God. These are disgraceful people. These are the one no one else would want.

[ 22 : 09 ] But the disgrace gets even further. Like, again, this is the lowest of lows. Look at what all this disgraceful living brings them to a place of.

Verse 17. Y'all with me? You having as much fun as I am? Okay. But when he came to himself, he said, how many of my father's hired hands have more than enough bread, but I perish with hunger? I'll rise and go to my father and I'll say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.

You could actually translate that as slaves. Treat me as a slave. I don't deserve to be a son. Treat me as a slave. As one of your servants.

Now, can you imagine the amount of pride this young man has had to swallow to come back to his father? I mean, like, literally.

[ 23 : 14 ] Put yourself in this situation. Like, I picture, you know, that look your dog gives you. You know, when he knows he's done something wrong. Like, it's that shameful look.

Like, I did it. I dug in the trash. I ate what I wasn't supposed to eat. You know, you know that look. That look of shame. That look of brokenness.

That look of humility. That, I imagine, is the look on this son's face as he walks back home knowing I'm not worthy to even walk on the grounds.

I should just be a slave. Notice this man's return. Just a few quick things. I'll hit them quickly. First, he realizes what he's done. The text says he came to his senses.

That is, he realizes who he is. He realizes how far he's fallen. And he wakes up. Secondly, he's humble and broken. Again, he says, I'm not worthy to be called a son.

[ 24 : 16 ] It's interesting here. He's no longer the arrogant young man that thinks he deserves his inheritance now. Now, he's a broken boy. Secondly, humbled in his father's sight.

Thirdly, he trusts that his father is good because he says in the text, how many of my father's servants have more than enough bread? In other words, my dad is the kind of dad that doesn't treat his slaves the way slaves ought to be treated.

My dad's the kind of dad that treats his slaves well. They have more than enough to eat. They have more than enough bread. In other words, this is what I know about my dad.

He's good. He's gracious. The Hebrew word would be chesed. It is the kindness of God. Notice next that he doesn't expect anything.

He even says, I'm going to say, treat me as a hired servant. Treat me as a slave. I don't expect to come home and be a son again. You see, here's the thing about grace that we must all understand and it's this.

[ 25 : 21 ] You don't deserve it. You see, if you're walking back home thinking, you know what? My dad's going to be so glad to see me. He's going to put me right back in the same status I was in the moment I left.

If that's the way you think about God, then you don't understand the grace of God. See, the only way you understand the grace of God is when you realize He shouldn't give it to you. That's when you understand the depths of His grace.

And so, the son understands that grace is an undeserved gift from, listen, an unobligated giver. The father doesn't owe him anything.

Next, he goes to his father. He doesn't go to a rehabilitation program. I'm not against rehabilitation programs at all, right? I'm just saying the object of his repentance is not morality.

The object of his repentance is not self-improvement. The object of his repentance is his dad. He looks to his dad first. I'm going back to dad. I'm not going to go make up with my brother first.

[ 26 : 28 ] I'm not going to, you know, hang out with my old buddies and friends. No, I'm going to dad. That's the object of my return. And then lastly, he goes home immediately. He arose and went.

He didn't start up at Starbucks so far as we know. There's no other side tracking. He's making a beeline home to see dad. Now, as disgraceful as this story is to this point, and it is disgraceful.

Are you feeling it? In a shame and honor culture, this is the lowest of lows. But listen, and everybody, and I keep trying to get you in the text, everybody listening to the story is like, say what? He did what? Are you kidding me? No one would do that. That's insane. Are you crazy? And then, the most disgraceful thing happens.

I mean, everything up to this point has been disgraceful, but the most disgraceful thing happens next because listen, listen, everybody listening to the story, the scribes and the Pharisees that are listening to this are saying, oh, we know what's coming down next.

[ 27 : 33 ] We know what's happening when he returns. This boy's going to be scorned. He's going to be slapped. He's going to be shamed by everybody in his family. He will be the outcast and the black sheep for the rest of his life.

And then verse 20 happens. And he arose and he came to his father while he was still a long way off.

His father saw him and felt compassion. And he ran.

What a disgrace. He ran and embraced his son and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father, not even listening, says to his servants, bring quickly the best robe and put it on him and give him a ring on his hand and put shoes on his feet and you take that fattened calf that we've been saving for the biggest celebration and you kill it and we're going to eat and we are going to celebrate.

[ 28 : 50 ] Why? Because my son was dead and now he's alive. He's lost and now he's found and they began to have a party. And the Pharisees were like, no he didn't.

No, he did not. No, no, no. There's no way something like this would happen. Because listen, now what we're seeing, listen, listen, is that the father does something way more disgraceful in that culture than what the son did.

Does the father not have any honor? Does the father not have any dignity? Does the father not have any self-respect? And yet this father is willing to do this.

Notice first, he's willing to identify with his son. He embraces him. In other words, picture this, picture this, picture this. His son, in the most disrespectful way imaginable, slapped his father's face.

And his father responds by kissing his son on the face. That's the beauty of this father.

[ 30 : 05 ] That's the compassion of this father. You know, it's unthinkable in this culture that a father would identify with a shameful child in this way.

Listen, it's almost as bad, let me see if I can think of something worse than this. I don't know, sharing a meal with a prostitute. eating with a tax collector.

That's about how shameful this is. That you would actually sit down at the table that everybody in society rightly should reject.

And you'll eat with him? Yes, he will. Not only does this father identify with his son by kissing him, but secondly, he reconciles with the son.

He puts shoes on his feet and a ring on his finger and a robe on his back. In other words, are you sitting down? Good. Are you listening? Everybody right here. He treats his son like a son.

[ 31 : 15 ] He treats his son not like a slave, not like a servant. He treats his son like a son. Notice this on the screen.

This will preach. The son is restored to the very status he fell from. It kind of sounds like salvation. We all fell because of sin, but Jesus by his grace will put you right back. He will restore you even though you don't deserve it, even though you should be rejected, even though the gates should be locked and you are never allowed in.

He flings open the doors and invites you in and puts you right back in the very status of the place in which you fell. And then finally, he not only identifies with the son and reconciles with the son.

He celebrates his son. He throws a party and there ain't no party like a Jewish party because a Jewish party don't stop. It goes on and on and on and on and on.

[ 32 : 28 ] And they celebrate that the son was dead and now he's alive. He was lost and now he has found. He ran away but the son has come home.

Isn't that beautiful? Like, don't you love this story? Isn't there a reason why it's a favorite and they all lived happily ever after? Let's pray. Isn't that how the story ends?

Everybody's happy. Everybody's rejoicing. Everybody's thrilled. Oh, that's right. We didn't finish the story. Everybody except verse 25.

Now, the older son was in the field and as he came, now it's important to note that the older son was in the field and what do you do in the field? Work. You might want to remember that.

The son is out working and he comes and draws to the house and he hears music and dancing because there ain't no party like a Jewish anyways. All right. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

[ 33 : 32 ] What's going on? What's all the noise? And he said to him, your brother has come and your father has killed the fattened calf because he received him back safe and sound but he was angry and refused to go in.

And his father came out and entreated him. What a gracious father. And he answered his father, look, these many years I've served you, look at everything I've done, look at how hard I've worked, I never disobeyed your command, that is I've kept the law, yet you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends, he never threw a party for me.

But when his son, this son of yours came back, what did you do? And this son, by the way, that devoured your property with prostitutes and you killed the fattened calf for him.

And the father said to this older son, son, you're always with me and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad for this, your younger brother was dead and is alive, he was lost and is found.

We see a disgraceful response. The older brother here is fuming mad. I mean, just, you can just see the smoke coming out of his ears. He is angry.

[ 34 : 51 ] Why didn't I get a party? This isn't fair at all. It doesn't make any sense. We all know this is not what my brother deserves.

You're tracking with the story. You see, if the younger brother is the one that broke all the laws, the older brother is the one who kept them all. I'm the good one.

I'm the good son, don't you know? I'm the one that has worked and served and been faithful. And again, it does not take a PhD in New Testament to see what Jesus is doing here.

If the first son, the lost son, is the sinners and tax collector that Jesus is eating with in verse 1, then who is the older son?

It's the Pharisee of verse 2. It's the ones that think they've kept the law and get angry at Jesus that he would eat with a tax collector and prostitute, which raises the real question, are you listening, faith family?

[ 35 : 51 ] Who's the real prodigal of the story? Notice this on the screen. Religion is just as disgraceful to God as recklessness.

If this story proves anything, it's that. Religion, that is thinking that you're in the field doing it for God and boy, he's so proud of you. I mean, he ought to just throw a party for you every day because he's got you on his team.

I mean, what would he do without you? You're such a good worker. But of course, this isn't about you and nothing in the kingdom is about you.

everything in the kingdom of God is about the grace of God. And therefore, religion, I would argue, is more dangerous to the kingdom than recklessness, brokenness.

It's actually the broken people, Jesus would say, that realize they need to be fixed. It's the sick that realize they need a physician. And the reason, again, I say more so is because recklessness

usually most of the time, not all the time, they usually end up realizing they need to come home.  
[ 37 : 04 ] It's religious people that brag about the fact they never left. And in this sense, the older brother is just as bad as the younger brother. I'm almost done. Hold on. The younger brother takes advantage of the father's goodness.

The older brother questions his father's goodness. How could you do something like this? You never did it for me. The younger brother shames the father by running away. The older brother shames the father by refusing to go into the party.

The younger brother is only concerned about what his father can give him. The older brother is only concerned about what the father owes him. I mean, if my brother gets that, how much more should I get given that I'm the good son?

And then lastly, listen, the younger brother wished! His father did. He wished his father did by making the request he made. But listen to me, the older son actually murdered his father.

The older brother took a knife and gouged it in his father's side and killed his father on the spot.

[ 38 : 11 ] You're like, he's making stuff up. That's not in my story. I don't see that anywhere in Luke 15. Who were the ones responsible for the death of Jesus?

The religious leaders. Not the prostitutes. Or the tax collectors. Or the fishermen.

Oh yes, we're all responsible in the sense that it was our sin that nailed him there. Yes, I'm fully aware of that. But I'm talking about historically, the ones that wanted the nails driven through his hands were the Pharisees.

Religion is what took Jesus to the cross in a very real way. The point faith family is this. You can either shame God through immorality or you can shame God through your morality by thinking you can do it on your own.

Now what does all this story teach us as I wrap it up? Five things. You say you don't have time for five things. I say hush. Five things. Five things quickly that we learn from this story that I want us to get.

[ 39 : 22 ] Number one is the kingdom reception. The kingdom reception. That is, who is it that gets the kingdom? And the answer is, it's the reckless one that comes home. It's the reckless one that comes home.

You see the same picture two weeks ago back in Luke 15 verse five. Look at it again. This is Luke 15 verse five. And when he was found, that is the lost sheep, the shepherd lays it on its shoulder rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors saying to them, rejoice with me. Why? For I have found my sheep that was lost. Do you see the same language in that parable that you see here?

The lost is now found. In other words, Jesus is for the one. Look at it on the screen. Jesus is for the sheep that went astray and he's for the son who ran away.

That's who Jesus is for. That's who Jesus goes after. That's the kingdom of God. Number two, the beauty of brokenness. The beauty of brokenness.

[ 40 : 27 ] We see here the brokenness, I mean, we see brokenness as shameful, but God sees brokenness as beautiful. Come on, get this.

When the father sees the brokenness of his younger son, remember puppy dog look? walking home humbled? I don't even deserve, I don't even deserve to be a slave.

What did the father do when he saw that brokenness? Oh, get it together. Don't you have any respect for yourself? Don't ever let anybody see you cry.

Suck it up, man. No, he feels compassion. And he hugs him. And he kisses his cheek.

God sees your brokenness as beautiful. And he will receive you, not tell you to be stronger.

[ 41 : 35 ] Because it's in your weakness you will find strength. Thirdly, the danger of religion, the danger of religion, the son that is being exposed isn't the son that ran away.

The son that's being exposed is the one that stayed home. Some of you have been going to church for a really long time, and that's a good thing. You should go to church for a really long time.

But you should heed this warning. Notice this on the screen. It's telling that the one that never left is the one that doesn't get in. the one that never left is the one that doesn't enter in into the celebration of God.

Please do not let church attendance create a foundation of religion for you that you think you are anything but by the grace of God.

Amen? Fourthly, the essence of the gospel, the essence of the gospel. both sons thought they could earn the father's love.

[ 42 : 46 ] The younger thinks this way, I'll just become a hired servant, right? I'll pay it back. Maybe if I go home I can work over years and years and years and years to earn my father's approval again.

Maybe ten years from now he will work up the ability because he'll see everything I've done to love me again. The older son just says, look at everything I've done.

I'm not nearly as bad as my brother. In other words, in the mindset of both of these sons, listen, the Pharisee thinks I'm okay and the prostitute thinks I'll never be okay.

There's no way I could ever do enough to earn God's favor and both misunderstand the grace of God. Here's the grace of God. You can't earn! it.

ever. The love of God is given freely. Just like the lost sheep couldn't find his way home and the son couldn't earn his way home, it's all of grace.

[ 43 : 53 ] This is the gospel. Faith family, you are not saved by works, you are saved by faith alone through the grace of God alone. That's the gospel.

And finally, you're like, I'm glad he's at the final point. Finally, the father's heart. There's just so much in this story. The father's heart. This is a trilogy.

It's a shepherd that loses a sheep. It's a woman that loses a coin. And it's a father that loses a son. And the parable one, the shepherd loses the sheep, he finds it, and what does he do?

He rejoices. Why?

Do you remember what we talked about two weeks ago? There's more rejoicing when one sinner repents than there is of 99 who never left.

[ 44 : 49 ] This is the father's heart. Jesus is for the one. He is for the sinner.

He's the kind of savior that receives sinners. God is the kind of God that rejoices when the lost are found and when runaways come home.

The kingdom of God is for the one. It's not for the one who is spiritually beautiful. It's for the one that is spiritually broken. And this shouldn't shock us, faith family.

Why? Why? Why? Listen, lean in. Because the kingdom of God is not based on a king who is afraid to be broken.

It's based on a king who actually was. Who knows what it's like to be broken. Who is the perfect image of God and yet did something as shameful as a cross.

[ 45 : 58 ] Trust me, faith family, there is nothing more disgraceful than to be hung on a tree. So let us not live in the constant fear of being broken.

Let's live in the freedom of knowing we already are. And maybe, maybe, just maybe, we'll understand the grace behind what Jesus said one night in the upper room.

this is my body. Say it with me. Broken for you. Broken for you.

Let's pray. Jesus, thank you that you were willing to be broken for us. Literally broken as you took our sin upon the cross.

I mean, we are so concerned about protecting an image well, there's not a lot of beauty in the eyes of the world of a bloody man suffocating in his own blood crucified to a cross.

[ 47 : 06 ] That's pretty disgraceful. And yet, it's the wisdom of God. For what the world calls foolish is the wisdom of God. And that, listen, that's the, Lord, help us, that's the paradigm that's got to change in us, and it's got to change in churches.

We have got to start seeing that this is not for the people with leather-bound Bibles who act like they have it all together and they want to brag about their church attendance. None of that smells like the kingdom.

The kingdom looks like the one who's been rejected all their life and they're ready to come home. the kingdom is about the one who knows they should at best be a slave and are shocked that they're treated as a son.

So help us get this. It'll look so weird, not only to our world, but to most churches in this world. but I'm convinced that as Jesus is for the one, so must we be.

So tonight help us as we enter into a time where we're going to think and reflect on the cross, on the brokenness of Jesus. And let us be reminded at night that Jesus was broken because this world is broken and he came to heal it.

[ 48 : 41 ] And we're broken. in more ways than we realize. And you have come to heal us and forgive us and save us and put on us the robe of righteousness.

Let us now think on these things as we remember the cross in Jesus name. Amen. Nabal Nabal Nabal Nabal Thank you.