

Jesus the Reason

Jesus and the Father

Luke 15: 11-32

Detailed Outline from the Sermon on March 2, 2008

What does the story tell us about the first son?

He's impetuous.

He's careless.

He comes to his senses. (He came to himself).

He's humble.

He's forgiven, received and restored.

What does the story tell us about the father?

He willingly gives his sons freedom and the resources to make their own choices.

He never loses interest in his far-away son.

He's quick to forgive, receive, restore.

He likes to celebrate.

He wants his whole family to own his values.

What does the story tell us about the second son?

He stays home and does what he perceives to be his duty.

He resents and possibly despises his brother.

He is *not at all* like his father.

He behaves like a martyr.

He is slow to forgive, receive, restore.

What does Jesus tell about lost people?

We are never *too* lost (Romans 8:38)

(All of us have a faraway place in our lives. Our distance might be in our repetition or our stubbornness...)

What we've really lost is ourselves. (Ephesians 2:10)

Yes, God is dishonored by things, but mostly we disappoint our potentials.

What we need most is the ultimate "aha!" (Acts 8:26-39)

We need to wake up, come to ourselves, live into ourselves – be who and how God made us and remade us in Christ to be.

The lost are an urgent matter to the Father. (Luke 15:1-7)

Jesus makes it so clear – the Father is like the good shepherd, who loves the sheep – all 100 – but would leave the 99 to pursue one lost and there is more rejoicing in heaven over one transformed soul than over 99 who've gone from found to more found.

What does Jesus tell us about our Father?

He's eager to forgive, receive, restore. (1 John 1:9)

He actually wants to do this – stands ready.

He's forever watchful and mindful for those far away. (John 3:16)

His arms are wrapped around his household, but his gaze is down the road.

He's committed to those who are near. (Psalm 23)

He's committed to our *care*, our *transformation* into His likeness, and His promises for our future.

While the Father also gives freedom to those who are near, He is emphatic about His wish that we would follow His gaze. (Matthew 28: 18-20, Acts 1:8)

He is calling us out. John 4:35 - "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest."

He wants us to have His heart. (Colossians 3:13)

First, for forgiveness, “Bear with one another...forgive as you have been forgiven.”

Then for the lost

What does Jesus tell us about those who *stay near*?

Don't misunderstand why God has you near. (John 15: 1-17)

To learn how to abide in the vine. What is characteristic about a branch that abides in the vine? It bears fruit. Others are impacted.

He wants to turn you inside out. (Galatians 1:11-2:21)

Paul says, “It's no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.”

Lose the consumer mentality! (Ephesians 5:21-32)

If I've been in Christ for a long time, my greatest pleasure is not likely to be found in hearing an old truth from one more angle. The best pleasure is found in watching others whom we love make discoveries.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love... (Ephesians 5:1)

Imagine a butterfly collector who doesn't know yet that he has is a collection of moths. Moths can be pretty cool, but hello! There's more!