

In this parable, Jesus teaches that in the kingdom of God:

(1) lost sinners are welcomed back into the family with rejoicing and

(2) self-righteous Pharisees are called to recognize they are lost and to embrace the gospel of God's free grace.

- I. The Younger Son Lost at Home (15:12)
 - A. The Request: Give Me Mine (Deut 21:17)
 - B. The Spiritual Significance: Idolatry (Rom 1:25)
 - C. The Father's Generosity (Deut 21:18-21)
- II. The Son Lost Far from Home (15:13-16)
 - A. His "Freedom" from the Father
 - B. Slavery to Sin Produces Death (Rom 6:23)
- III. The Son Returns Home (15:17-20a)
 - A. His Realization
 - B. His Plan (Ps 84:10)
 - C. His Return
- IV. The Father Welcomes Him Home (15:20b-24)
 - A. Our Welcoming God
 - B. Our Forgiving God (Eph 1:7-8; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 3:18)
 - C. Our Restoring God (Eph 2:1-10)
 - D. Our Rejoicing God (15:23-24; 15:7, 10)

Reflection and Application Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. Why did Jesus tell this parable? What is the central message?
2. How does Jesus apply this parable to his audience of tax collectors and sinners? How does it apply to his audience of scribes and Pharisees? How does it apply to you today?
3. Do you see yourself more in the younger or older son?
4. What does it look like to return home and enter into the Father's celebration?