

“The Two Kinds of Lost People”

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

● THE STORY BEFORE THE STORY

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”³So he told them this parable: Luke 15:1-3 (English Standard Version)

- Tax-gatherers and sinners = the irreligious
- Pharisees and scribes = the religious
- Religion = keeping the rules so God will owe me

● THREE MESSAGES FOR THE IRRELIGIOUS

- A loving Father will allow you to leave.

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.” Luke 15:11-13 (ESV)

- Turning to your Father is the only thing that makes sense.

“And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.” Luke 15:14-16 (ESV)

“But 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! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, . . .” Luke 15:17-18a (ESV)

- God’s love and forgiveness can pardon and restore any and every kind of sin or wrongdoing.

“I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’ ”²⁰And 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. ²¹And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’²²But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.” Luke 15:18-24 (ESV)

- God’s grace = God’s goodness toward those who deserve only punishment

. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24 (ESV)

● JESUS’ MESSAGE TO THE RELIGIOUS

- Morality (or religion) can be just a way to use God to make Him give you the things in life you really want.

See Luke 15:25-30.

- Two Ways of Finding Happiness and Fulfillment (Timothy Keller):

- Self-discovery □ Moral conformity

- Sin is not just breaking the rules; it is putting yourself in the place of God as Savior.

And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ” Luke 15:31-32 (ESV)

"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' " Luke 15:25-30 (ESV)