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Our True Father

Dr. George Hu, PsyD
Luke 15:11-32



Luke 15:11-32

The Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.



Luke 15:11-32

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’



Luke 15:11-32

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’



Luke 15:11-32

²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”



Mental Health Concepts

- Admit there's a problem
- Ways to happiness, satisfaction, and a meaningful life
- Healing from family of origin problems



Jesus' Audience

- Tax Collectors
- “Sinners”
- Pharisees and teachers of the law



The Younger Son

- Estate division: $\frac{2}{3}$ to older son, $\frac{1}{3}$ to younger son
- Asking for inheritance early = “I wish you were dead”
- Maximize pleasure, minimize pain
- Disappointment: The bubble always bursts



The Younger Son

- Father sees him and *runs*
- Father puts the robe on him
- Kills the fattened calf and has a celebration



The Older Son

- Angry at the cost because it's ***his*** money
- Humiliates and insults his father
- The father responds tenderly



Jesus Redefines God

- God is our heavenly *Father*
- Emotional abandon, generosity, willingness to receive agony of love
- Not stingy, not demanding, not totalitarian
- Experience with our family of origin may be projected (wrongly) onto God



Jesus Redefines God

- Power
 - Jesus is powerful, but not as we expect
 - Power = treating the son not as he deserves
 - Power = kindness, mercy, grace
- Jesus is **NOT** a political Messiah



Jesus Redefines Sin

- “I reject you because I never disobeyed you”
- Sin \neq doing the right things, not doing wrong things
- Sin = rejecting what Father wants, things should work how I want
- Righteousness kept the older son from Father



Common Ways We Try to Make Meaning

- Moral conformity: do the right thing, good things will come
 - Be a good person and good things will come
 - “You don’t need God, You just have to be a good person”



Common Ways We Try to Make Meaning

- Self-Discovery:
 - Find my true self/what's right for *me*
 - Discover what right and wrong are for *me*
 - Live according to my own values
 - Be true to myself
 - Seems progressive/ pluralistic/ modern



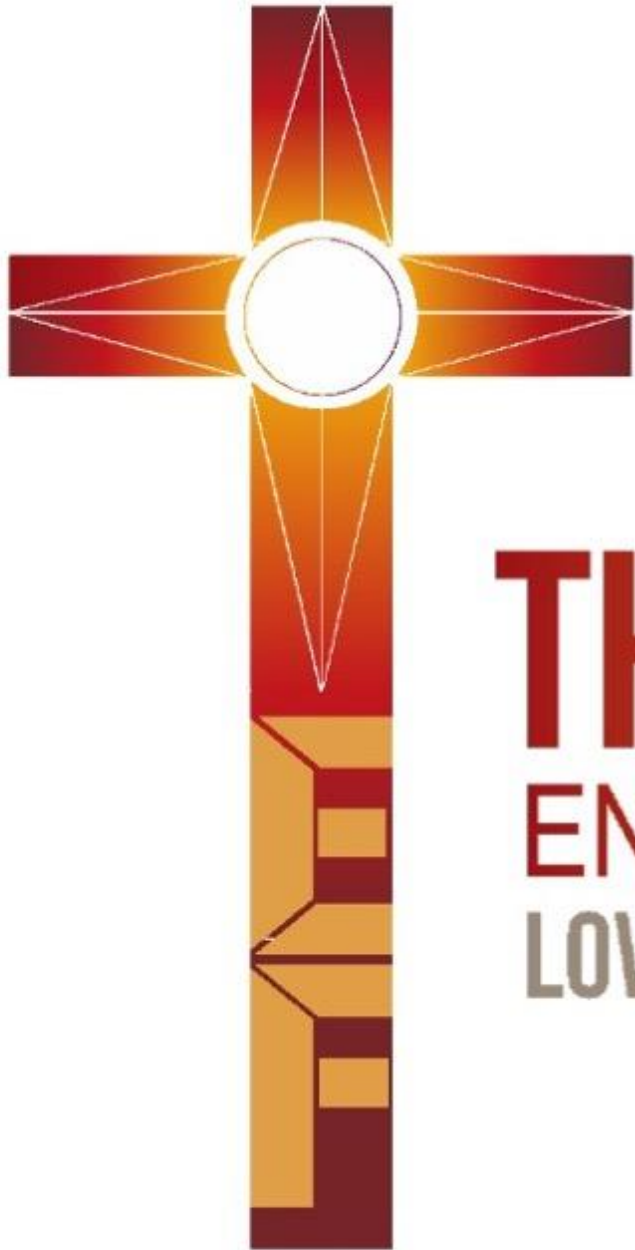
Jesus Redefines Sin

- Two ways to be your own savior and reject God and get control of the Father's stuff
- Original Sin



Jesus Redefines Salvation

- Christianity does NOT divide the world into “good” and “bad” people
- We need the initiating love of the Father
- Repent for something other than sins
- Moved by the cost of what it took to bring you home



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