

The Pursuit- Pt 4: Luke 15: 25-32

We are in part 4 of our series called The Pursuit. You will be finishing off the parable of the prodigal son on your own. You will be reading verses 25-32. In the first parable, the sheep got lost because of its nature to wander away. In the second, the coin was lost due to circumstances beyond its control. In this third parable, the (younger) son gets lost as a result of his own choice. In this passage of scripture we will be looking at the older son in this parable, and his lostness. We looked at the younger son previously. Remember, this chapter deals with God's attitude toward sinners. Other themes are joy, and repentance. As you read, here are a few things I want you to keep in mind.

1. **The audience. Jesus is talking to mixed crowd, people who were included in this mixed crowd were sinners, tax collectors, and religious leaders (AKA) Pharisees.**
2. **All these parables are connected.**
3. **The younger son was irreligious, and as you read you will find out that the older was religious. More on that later.**

Open up in a word of prayer on your own. Read 25-27, and answer the following questions.

1. **The older brother missed the banquet apparently, what was he doing? What did the servant tell him what was going on?**

"The older brother was outside the banquet, having missed it apparently because of his preoccupation with work and his distant relationship with his father. For him, and for the Pharisees, all was based on merit and reward. He (The older son), viewed himself more as the father's servant than as his son."

Read verses 28-30 and answer the following questions.

2. **Why was the older son angry? Put yourself in the older son's shoes, would you be angry? (This would be a good time to re-read verses 11-24 again.)**

3. **How is the older son like the Pharisees in this chapter? Go back and read verses 1-2. What similar attitudes do they have?**

Let's grab some insight on Pharisees, read Matthew 23:1-7.

The Pharisees were influential religious leaders around the time of Jesus. They were very pious (proud), held to the Law, and were ritually pure. Jesus did not get along very well with the religious leaders, the Pharisees. Jesus did not care for their religion either. Not that any of those things were bad, but the Pharisees were very hypocritical. What this means for us, of course, is that we do not want to be either like the Pharisees nor the Sadducees when it comes to our worship, beliefs and practices.

4. After reading Matthew 23:1-7, how is the older son "religious?" Did he care for his lost younger brother?

Think about these quotes.

"He hasn't stayed home (older son) because he loved his father, but because working in his fields was a way to get what he wanted."

"He (older son) was devoted to his father's law, and he was devoted to his father's service; but he was entirely out of sympathy with his father's heart; and therefore unable to set the true value upon his brother."

5. How was the older son selfish? Re-read verses 29-30.

The father responds to his older son's hostility with grace, and such love. In verse 29, the younger son says **"But he answered his father, 'Look!'"** Another way of saying this is **"Look dad!"** The older son said this with such anger, notice the exclamation point at the end of the sentence.

Read verses 31-32, and answer the following questions.

6. How was the father loving and gracious in these verses?

The Greek word “teknon,” translated "child" or "son," is a term of tender affection. The father pointed out his older son's privileged position, as always benefiting from his father's company.

Here we see the heart of the father in this parable. These parables reveal the heart and love of God as well. God loves sinners, He searches for sinners, God restores sinners, and God rejoices when they are found. I want you guys to read **Ephesians 2:1-5** as we close. Salvation begins with God friends. All of us were once lost, but God being rich and mercy made us alive with Christ, and He gives grace to those who repent, turn away from sin, and place their faith in Jesus. This is a cause for a celebration. If this is God's attitude, then it should be ours as well.

Take a moment to pray. Blessings! Stay tuned for our recap with all the parables in Luke chapter 15.