



World Christian Fellowship

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Story of 2 Sons – Part 05

Older Son- Hypocrite

Luke 15:25-28

Luke 15:25-28, *“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’*

²⁸ “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.

What brings the Lord joy?

Recovery of the lost. The salvation of sinners.

The Pharisees and the scribes wanted nothing to do with sinners.

Jesus wanted everything to do with sinners.

These two parables draw the Pharisees in.

Jesus draws them in by making the first two parables questions.

Jesus draws them in as if they were the person in the story. Drawing them into the experience and the thinking of the main character so that they really play the role in their minds.

1. Younger son
2. Father
3. Older son

We have looked at the younger son.

Last 2 weeks we have been looking at the Father.

Loving Father

Restoring Father.

This week we will look at his character as a joyful saviour not a reluctant saviour.

V 11-12, *Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.*

Unbelievable request yet the father grants him his request.

He had no concern for his father.

He gave the property

Younger son used the wealth turn them into cash and walked away.

Prodigal living and wasted all his possessions.

End up in wants.

Goes to the citizen of the country.

Sent to take care of pigs.

Lowest of lowest into his life.

Come back to his senses.

Thinking about the father.

Repented and returned to the father.

Father did 5 amazing things.

1. Saw him in a distance
2. Compassion on him
3. Ran towards him
4. Hugged him
5. Kissed him.

Rehearsed his speech

V 18-19, *I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."*

But when he meets the father, he would not let him finish his speech.

V 21, *And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

But his father did another unbelievable thing.

He received him and recognised him by restoring him fully by giving three things.

1. Robe
2. Ring
3. Sandals

We looked in detail that God is not looking for servants but sons.

God is not a reluctant saviour but a joyful Saviour. We saw last week from the life of Manasseh, how God rejoices to save the sinners.

There was a feast to celebrate the Father love, mercy, kindness, and goodness.

There was a party when the sheep was found.

There was a party when the coin was found.

There was a huge celebration when the son that was lost is found.

Luke 19:10, *for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost, not just for the joy of the sinner, not just for the joy of Christ, but for the joy of God. and the whole Kingdom of God.

When we get to heaven it's going to be one long, everlasting celebration.

Elder Brother:

V 25, *“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.*

Who is the older son?

The Pharisees and the scribes, and the legalists, all were sitting there listening to the story.

Position of Privilege:

He is the elder brother. He is entitled to two-thirds of His father’s possessions.

Deuteronomy 21:17, *But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.*

Since his younger brother has already received his part of the inheritance, v. 12, everything belongs to this man.

When his father dies, not only will he receive his father's possessions, he will also become the head of the family. Much has been given to this man already and more is on the way. He has been blessed indeed!

V 25, "His older son was in the field."

He has been out in the field working.

Landowners work, sitting under a shade tree making sure everybody else does what they need to, overseeing is what they do.

In fact, noblemen in the Middle East didn't usually work. That was somehow beneath their dignity at a certain point.

He is busy accumulating more wealth.

What strikes is that the father hasn't told him anything?

The father certainly hasn't been looking for him.

The father hasn't sent a messenger out to the field wherever he was to say that his brother is back. We are going to have a party.

- Come at once.
- Greet your brother,
- Embrace your brother,
- Rejoice with me and
- Help me get this party.

Now the elder brother was the number one, primary party planner in the family. That was the job of the firstborn son. He had the responsibility to carry off all the events of the family, particularly those that were designed to be in honour of the family.

The party was in honour of the family, not so much the son who came back, but the father who took him back, reconciled him. The whole village came together to give honour to such a loving, gracious, merciful, forgiving, reconciling father, but nobody bothered to tell him.

Why the father doesn't go to call him?

Why didn't somebody go get him and bring him back?

The answer is he has no relationship to the father.

The father knows he has no interest in his brother.

He proved that at the beginning of the story when he didn't try to stop his brother from doing what was terrible.

He had no interest in his father, proved that by not intervening between his brother and his father to stop his brother from such a dishonourable act toward his father.

Elder son took his part of the inheritance gladly, never defending his father's honour. He has no relationship to anybody in the family.

Being out in the field is sort of a metaphor for where he was in terms of that family.

- The younger son lost in a far country,
- The elder son lost in a father's field.

- The younger son was a lost hedonist, he lived for pleasure.
- The elder brother was a lost moralist, he lived to maintain appearances.

But the symbolism is that both were way off from the father.

There are two ways you can be lost.

- ❖ One way is to break the rules and do as you please. This is how the younger brother lived, and he was lost.
- ❖ The other way is to keep all the rules and to be good. This is how the elder brother lived, and he was lost too.

They both come home but to very different receptions.

The elder brother is a picture of the religious elite.

They were also in a place of privilege.

They had God's Law and it appeared, outwardly at least, that they were walking in the Law!

They looked good to others, but there was a real problem in their hearts!

The problem was hidden from human view, but God could see it. They were religious, but they were lost!

The same thing could be true of some here!

- You are a moral person.
- You come to church.
- You don't curse, drink, steal, or cheat.
- You don't smoke, chew, or adultery.
- You have been baptized and belong to the church.

By all appearances, you are as good, or better, than anyone around you.

The Lord knows your true condition. You can fool others, but you can't fool Him!

1 Samuel 16:7, *But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have ^[c]refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

You can be good, moral, and active in church and still be lost.

Matthew 7:21-23, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord,*

Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

- ✓ Religion does not equal salvation.
- ✓ Church membership does not equal conversion.
- ✓ Being close to the things of God does not equal being saved by the grace of God.

Being in a church does not make you a Christian any more than sleeping in a garage makes you a car, neither does climbing a tree make you a squirrel.

You must not depend on who you are or what you have done for your salvation.

You must be born again. (John 3:3 &7)
Salvation is by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Are you saved?

The day ends. It says he came and approached the house.

Since he hadn't up to that point heard anything, it must have been an indication it was a pretty big estate. This father has a great estate where someone can actually be far enough away you don't even know when a huge celebration involving hundreds of people is going on at your house, which is a way to indicate the greatness of the kingdom of God.

But he comes back, and he approaches the house.

"He heard music and dancing."

When he comes to approach the house, not having been included in anything at all.

He is confused, as far as he knows, there is no reason for celebration at the father's house. He lived there all his life and he has never seen a reason for celebration.

Elder son is like a Pharisee.

He pretends to stay in the father's house,

- to be dutiful,
- to do what the father says,
- to hang around,
- to get what he wants,
- to get approval,
- to get affirmation,
- to get wealth,
- to possess the land, and

- community prestige.

He wants to appear religious. On the outside he upholds all the conventional modes of external honour. So, he comes, and he hears the music and the dancing.

The Greek word '*sumphōnias*' and the *choros*, from which we get "symphony" and "chorus."

In those days the men danced in a circle, men only, and there was clapping and singing. There would be instruments included in the music.

In fact, *sumphōnias* is originally a double pipe, but it also, in some Arabic translations, is used to refer to voices together.

So, voices, instruments, dancing, the whole thing is going on. It's a celebration. The fattened calf has been killed. The meat would continue to be cooked for hours and the singing and the celebrating would go on into the night of this wonderful celebration.

It's already full-blown when the older son arrives.

- He is stunned.
- He is shocked.
- He is surprised.
- He is confused.
- He is suspicious.

But mostly he is suspicious, because legalists are always suspicious, particularly of joyful people.

Something this big wasn't ever planned in a day. This was planned by months of preparation, and not without him as the centre of it.

He is, after all, the owner of the land, because the estate has already been divided, though he doesn't take possession of his part until his father's death, it is already assigned to him. These are his resources.

This is then his calf and all the rest of the things that are going on are using the things that belong to him and he hasn't even been consulted.

Here is the biggest event that the village has ever known, the biggest event the family's ever known, and he doesn't even know anything about it. He doesn't even know it's happening, until he shows up!

What should be the next line should be in the story?

The elder son when he approached the house, he heard music and dancing, and immediately rushed into his father and said, 'Father, what's all the joy about?'

If he loved his father, he would have rushed into the house and said, "What's going on?"

His father would have said, "Your brother's home," and he would have embraced his father and rejoiced with tears because he knew his father loved his brother.

He knew he had ached in his heart when he was gone, and he knew he had gone out to look for him day after day, even though he didn't know he was back. No one had told him yet.

Whatever made his father rejoice would make him rejoice if he loved his father.

But he has no love for his father at all.

He has a love for himself.

It's all about him and his property and his reputation and his prestige.

V 26, *So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant*

The Greek word ***paidiōn***, which means a young boy.

All the family servants would be inside. They would be taking care of all the guests. 200 guests wouldn't be unusual to eat a fattened calf. But on the outside, there were young boys.

Middle Eastern culture, the adults would all be inside, in the courtyard of the house having this great celebration at some point, and out on the fringes would be the kids that didn't get to come, but they were sort of the perimeter celebrators.

The fringe participants, the young boys would all hang out on the edges because this is a huge event. This would be the first group that he would meet as he comes in and the first ones he runs into after he hears all this are these young boys.

This is shocking.

What in the world has happened?

I go to work.

It's a day like any other day.

I go out there to sit under the tree and make sure everybody's does what they are supposed to.

I come in and you have got the biggest celebration ever.

What is going on?

Why wasn't I consulted?

How is it that I don't know about this?

V 27, And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

Should have filled his heart with joy.

He knew his father's heart had been broken when his brother left. He knew how he regularly looked for him and longed for him. If he loved his father at that point, he would have immediately run in.

But it really was his fear that his brother would come back.

V 27, *And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'*

His worst fears, his brother came back, and his father Received him??

This outrageous conduct is more than this older brother can bear.

"safe and sound,"

Greek word '**hugainō**' means wholeness, well-being.

But in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, that word is almost always connected to shalom!

Peace.

The father received him back in peace. This is not just good health.

This is peace of a full reconciliation between a father and son. It isn't his son came back and the father told him to sit at the edge of town for a week and think about what he had done until he gained a right to talk to his father and then he had given him the things he needed to do to earn back his reconciliation.

The father received him, and he received him in shalom, made peace, forever!

There wouldn't be a party if he had come back and had to work for the next twenty years.

This is the worst possible scenario because now the father is using his resources on this party. The son has already depleted the whole family treasury by taking his half, selling cheaply, and leaving, which meant that that whole thing couldn't grow so that the older son when the father did die would have more.

Now younger son is back depleting more of our family resources. The foolish father is using those resources on him.

The son is the favoured guest at the banquet, but the banquet is really in honour of the father.

The town is there to celebrate a father's gracious, kind, loving, and reconciling.

A legalist who thinks you earn your way to heaven.

A legalist doesn't understand that God's joy is found in justifying the ungodly.

God's joy is found in forgiving the sinner who is bankrupt and has nothing.

For the first time in the story the Pharisees must be saying that is the right attitude.

The Pharisee found their HERO of the story!

Exactly that is how he should feel. He should be outraged. We are outraged.

V 27, *And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fattened calf.'*

Not only the father taken him.

Not only the father restored peace forever.

Not only the father is celebrating.

But he killed the fattened calf? Why?

Later in **V29**, he complains saying that *“yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.”*

V 28, *“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.*

The Pharisees said, "Look, you receive and eat with sinners. You have a banquet with sinners. How can you do that?"

They didn't understand that God's joy and hence God in Christ, Christ's joy, was in receiving repentant sinners, prodigals, profligates, the immoral, and the outcasts.

But for a legalist, that's outrageous conduct!

Elder son had no love for his brother.

- He didn't rejoice in his brother coming back.
- He had no love for his father.
- He didn't rejoice with his father any more than he defended his father at the beginning when his father was hearing the request from his younger son.

This is not a believer.

This is not a Christian.

This is a typical, religious hypocrite standing on the outside condemning the gracious work of salvation.

He is angry.

That's the only emotion he feels.

Do you know what?

The Pharisees and scribes think it's right.

Legalists don't believe in grace.

- They don't understand unmerited favour.
- They don't understand free forgiveness.
- They don't understand the removal of punishment.
- They don't understand somebody else bearing their shame, taking their scorn.

Remember the Old Testament prophet Jonah?

Jonah 4:1-4, *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ² So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³ Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" ⁴ Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"*

The hypocrisy of his anger is that it rests on the presumption that, while Nineveh deserves no mercy, Jonah does!

Jonah was distraught because God showed mercy to Nineveh, yet he was blind to the mercy God was showing him.

What Jonah doesn't see is that God is being kind to him as well by exposing Jonah's contempt for the very divine compassion he himself so desperately needs.

The Pharisees were also like Jonah!

Luke 13:10-15, *Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. ¹²But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." ¹³And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. ¹⁴But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?"*

V 28, *"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.*

Public display of private hatred.

So far, he was hiding his hatred. He probably had the community believing that he was very respectful and honoured his father. He did whatever his father wanted him to do. Everybody probably thought he had some love for his father.

But here his real attitude comes out.

He cannot enter into this joy because he has no love for God, and he has no love for the sinners God is recovering.

This is religious hypocrisy!

People who look like they hang around the house of God, but they don't know the heart of God. They are trying to earn their way to heaven, which is the greatest deception that Satan has ever invented.

When salvation comes only to those that are spiritually bankrupt, destitute, impoverished and fall on their faces as beggars before a God they trust will be willing to forgive them, and repent of their sins. Then they receive His lavish love and all that comes with it.

But legalists don't like that.

How can you do that?

How can you just do that when he didn't deserve it?

It's all about what you deserve and what you earn and what you gain and how good you are.

The elder brother has the perfect opportunity to honour his father.

- He is a rebel.
- He is not an outward rebel, but inward.
- He is a secret sinner.

He feels all the same lusts that his brother felt, but he hides them because legalism never changes your flesh.

He feels the same lusts, the same longings, the same desires, but he caps them and never fulfils them because he has a stronger desire for prestige and honour and to gain his father's estate.

He was driven by pride more than other things.

Now we know that he hates his father and hates his brother. We know that he is indifferent to the recovery of his brother and indifferent to the compassion of his father. He can't rejoice with either one.

Exactly the way the Pharisees were.

When you think about a hypocrite, you must think a little more deeply than the surface.

Hypocrites stay near the house of God.

- They are religious.
- They are moral.
- They have no relationship to God.
- They have no desire to honour Him.
- They have no interest in His honour or heaven's joy.
- They concerned about their own self-promotion.
- They think they can earn their way with people and God.

Truthfully, they are completely alienated from God.

Religious hypocrites do what's expected on the outside. They follow the external religious and moral patterns. But inside they are just filled with secret sins.

Jesus said about them, on the outside they are painted white, inside they stink and they are full of dead men's bones, like rotting corpses.

Under the surface they are filled with bitterness, hatred, jealousy, anger, and lust.

The hypocrite is lost and more profoundly lost because he spent his whole life convincing everybody, he was good. But truthfully, he was way off from being good.

Whereas if you are like the prodigal and you have made it clear that you are wretched.

Self-righteous hypocrites hate,

- The idea of salvation by grace alone.
- The idea of full forgiveness for repentant sinners.
- The joyful celebration.
- To be part of the celebration.

Luke 15:7, *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

Unless you repent like the prodigal, you can't be saved.

You can't enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus came to save sinners, self-confessed, repenting sinners.

Repentance is the key to everything.

Elder son, he has no interest in repentance.

He has

- no knowledge of God,
- no love for Him, and
- no love for sinners.

Really there are two kinds of sinners in the world:

- The religious
- The irreligious.
- The moral
- The immoral.

The Father is there for both.

Whatever kind of sinner you are, Jesus came into this world, born into this world in order to live and to die and to provide salvation for both kinds of sinners and all those in the mix in between.

V 28, *“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.”*

Here we see God the initiator again.

The father came out of his house and ran right down to the middle of town for all to see, bearing the scorn and the shame of the embarrassment of violating public, common, conventional behaviour. He did it to embrace the sinner and protect him from the shame.

Here the father leaves the festival, goes out and does what you would never expect God to do, beg a sinner, beg a hypocrite.

But God is the one who seeks to save the lost.

When the information about the elder son reaches the father, the word comes to him that his son is on the outside and he is not going to come in.

Father now knows he has his second rebel son.

Let us find out how God feels about religious hypocrites?

The father would be absolutely insulted by this.

It is an utter disregard for the father's honour, the father's joy, the brother's well-being. He shows himself as having no love for either of them.

The traditional Middle Eastern response would be to take the son and give him a public beating for such dishonour.

But nothing goes the way you think it's going to go in this story. It's just one breach of perceived honour after another.

But instead of the father ordering him to be beaten and locked in a room somewhere until he can be dealt with, dishonoured father comes out.

The father starts begging him.

Here he shows up again in mercy.

Here he shows up again in compassion.

Here he shows up love, humility, and kindness.

Leaves the party, comes out, goes into the night with everybody watching. Sure enough everyone is going to go through and they know what's going on.

Another act of selfless love kindly toward this son in the same way that he ran to embrace the younger son. He goes out in

mercy and he reaches to the hypocrite the same way he reached to the rebel.

Greek word *parakaleō*. a word that comes in a noun form, the paraclete, meaning the Holy Spirit, the one who comes alongside.

- ✓ Father pleads with him!
- ✓ Calls him to come to the kingdom.
- ✓ Come to his house.
- ✓ Come to the celebration.

This son with whom the Pharisees and scribes are so clearly identified should have brought them face-to-face with themselves and their complete ignorance of the father whom they said they served.

- ❖ They were in the house,
- ❖ They were around,
- ❖ They were the religious ones,
- ❖ They were the dutiful ones,
- ❖ They were the moral ones.

But they didn't know God.

- They didn't know the heart of God.
- They had no understanding of the joy of God.
- They had no interest in the recovery of lost sinners.

- They refused to honour God for saving grace, which has always been the way God saved.

Conclusion:

Elder brother could have enjoyed fellowship with the father anytime he wanted. But apparently, he was too wrapped up in his own legalism and narrow-mindedness to realize it.

This son wanted what the father had, but he did not want the father, just like his younger brother!

Even though he didn't want the father, he did not want anyone else to have the father either.

What a tragedy!

The same thing is true in many lives today!

People want the church.

They want to feel better about themselves.

They want a fire insurance policy. They want the get out of hell free card.

But they don't really want an intimate relationship with the Father.

Often, they resent those who do want that closeness.

I just want to remind you that you are as close to the Lord as you want to be!

You have as much fellowship with Him as you want to have.

You can have more, if you want it.

Do you?