

TITLE AND NUMBER: 73. The story of the lost son



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): Luke 15:11b-32

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! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants". 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 round him and kissed him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son". 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. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found". (v17-24a)

What does this Bible passage tell us?

This is the story of a younger son who wanted his inheritance before his father was even dead! No thought for his father's wellbeing, he was impatient and wanting life on his own terms. Plenty of money, plenty of friends - until the money ran out. A famine hits the country and he finds himself looking after pigs and eyeing up the pigs' food as there was nothing else to eat.

Then 'he comes to his senses' (v17). Reality kicks in when he considers the fact that even his dad's servants have three meals a day! He decides to go home; he plans a speech. "I've sinned against heaven and you, let me be a servant of yours." We are told that his dad has been looking for him to return and, when he sees him, he hoists up his tunic and runs to him, throws his arms around him and celebrates extravagantly.

Though the father loved both sons, the older brother was not happy and refused to be involved with the celebration. People respond in different ways when we decide to turn our lives around. It is important that we realise our mistakes and come back and be part of God's family again.

Each of us has been like the young son, rejecting God and going our own selfish way. The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus is looking for us to return home. No conditions, no retribution. Only love, forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance into God's family where we truly belong. We have all made mistakes. God does not reject anyone who asks for forgiveness.

God wants to rescue us from the mess we have got ourselves into. We cannot earn it as it is a free gift., So why wait? We can have a full, worthwhile life here, now and for eternity.

Reflections:

- If you do not feel that you are part of God's family, how might you respond to the opportunity to belong or to return to Him?
- Why would you delay? God is always looking for the son or daughter who went away.
- If you see yourself as the elder son, rejoice and remember that God loves all of us.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

