



The Essentials: The Gospel of Luke

Session 5: Luke 13-16

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: Luke 15:11-32

Opening Thought:

The context is often overlooked, but here Jesus gives the Parable of the Prodigal Son, one of his most remarkable and memorable parables, in Samaria. That the Parable of the Prodigal Son provides a radical perspective into the profound abundance of God's grace is obvious, but the fact that it's given in Samaria accentuates and sharpens its message. Christians frequently point out how we can identify with *both* the son who knowingly and intentionally trashes his gift of the father's inheritance, *and* we can identify with the son who resents the gratuity of the father's hospitality. This passage has been cherished for centuries because of the way it illustrates topics like God's grace, the nature of repentance, the weight of shame, the risk of resentment, and the depth of God's love.

Discussion:

1. Go and read vv. 1-5. What is the context of the Parable of the Prodigal Son? How does that influence your reading of the parable?
2. What does it take for the younger son to realize his foolishness? Can you relate to any part of this younger brother's story?
3. Read the response of the older brother in vv. 25-32. Do you resonate with any part of his attitude?
4. How would you describe the father in the story? Is that how you think of God?
5. How might you cultivate the heart of this father in your own life?

Check in and Closing Prayer

Luke 15:11-32

[11] And Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. [12] And 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. [13] Not 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. [14] And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. [15] So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. [16] And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

[17] “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! [18] I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. [19] I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ [20] And 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. [21] And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ [22] But 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. [23] And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. [24] For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

[25] “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. [26] And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. [27] And 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.’ [28] But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, [29] but 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. [30] But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ [31] And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. [32] It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”