

## Lost and Found: Part three (Luke 15:11-24)

### The wayward son and the waiting Father:

The three part parable leads to the wayward son and the Waiting Father. Look at the scenario as Jesus unfolds the story right before our eyes. A rich Father with two sons; the younger of the two decides to become very bold and demands his share of property from the Father. Without much discussion whatever legally would go to the younger son passes hands. Not long after, the younger son decides to take off to a distant country and spend it all in wild, wanton living. Deliberately of his own choice he decides to leave the security and protection of his own home and break his fellowship and relationship with his Father for the exciting future that lay ahead him. The sheep was lost because of his foolishness, the coin because of carelessness, finally the younger son because of his own choice.

The son in a distant country is a picture of many who walk away from the attention, care, security and the scrutiny of the Father's house. Even when they enjoy the warmth and the love of the Father's house, they are constantly thinking and being beckoned by the call of the world far away from their home. The distant country seems to promise so much more: freedom, carefree living, excitement, no rules, no curfew and the list goes on and on. The grass always seems greener on the other side till we are actually on the other side. That's when many have a rude awakening and are hit with the reality of the hardships that await them. Pretty soon the party is over as the money is gone and all those who were attracted by the wealth disappear. The Bible says that "he began to be in need". Look at the plight of the younger son: broke, busted, and bankrupt, and to add insult to injury, now a severe famine hits the land. Hired to feed pigs, a disgusting and deplorable assignment according to the Jewish culture; he does not even have a morsel to put in his mouth. Reality hits him like a ton of bricks and he comes to his senses as he remembers the good old days and talks to himself with both shame and realism. He takes full responsibility for his sins, resolves to make a full confession of them and return to the father's house as a hired servant. Wrong choices in life often give us ample time to regret them, but he makes one wise choice; "So he got up and went to his Father".

### The Waiting Father:

When the son is gone the Father's heart is broken, but he waits for the return of his son patiently. The repenting son cannot eclipse the love and concern of the compassionate father who eagerly looked forward to the day when his son will return. It was undignified for him to run to meet his returning son. Can you envision the two embracing each other as the son wants to make a full confession with the plea to be made a hired hand; while the Father's compassionate heart reaches out in forgiveness? Their emotions well up and burst as they run

into each other's arms, and immediately without any further delay or thought the Father sets the plan into motion to celebrate his son's return. His actions parallel those of the rejoicing shepherd and woman in the two previous stories. But there is an added dimension to God's love in this third part. We see how sensitive God's love is especially when we need it most. It was Saint Augustine who said once 'God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love.' Jesus in this three part parable presents our heavenly Father as loving us all, especially when we are hurting from the results of our own choices, decisions and sins. God's amazing grace is portrayed through these parables. Indeed "the son of man came to seek and save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).