



LOVED

“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved... is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.”

- Timothy Keller

THE LESSON: LUKE 15

Today's lesson comes from a part of the Bible called “the Gospels”. There are four Gospels in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and they give accounts of the life of Jesus. This particular passage comes from the Gospel of Luke, which is traditionally believed to have been authored by Luke the Physician, a Gentile (which means a non-Jewish person), who was a missionary companion to Paul on some of his journeys.

+++

Jesus was a master story-teller, but unlike many of our stories, his parables had a divine message to relay. They were told in specific situations to explain truths about God in terms that his hearers could relate to. The parable we're going to look at today is a very famous one and you may have heard it before. If that's the case, try to imagine that you are there in the crowd hearing Jesus tell it for the first time.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

At home, find a quiet space and spend some time imagining what it is like to be the son or daughter who leaves. Reflect on these questions:

Why did you leave?

What was it like to be away?

What happened while you were away?

Why did you come back?

What was it like to be greeted with love and forgiveness by the parent you had hurt?

Spend some time thanking God, your loving Father, for his complete forgiveness and unconditional love.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer of thanksgiving, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

O God, our loving Father, we thank thee for all the blessings thou hast given us, and above all for our salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to show forth our thankfulness by trying in everything to please thee; for the sake of the same our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. (FROM THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, PAGE 626)

LOVED

LUKE 15: **THE FATHER'S LOVE**

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” ³So he told them this parable...

¹¹And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And 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. ¹³Not 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. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And 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! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.’”

²⁰And 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. ²¹And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²But 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. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For 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. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And 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.’ ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but 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. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”