

RECEIVED WITH JOY

THE LESSON: LUKE 15

God is holy. And our sin is a problem. It has fractured the relationship we ought to have with our Creator. But God is a *good* Father. He has never given up on us.

Though the consequence of our sin is death, God made a way for us to come back home: Jesus. Many of us do not respond to God's mercy quickly. We shy away from our Father, living in sin and separated from him. And yet, God "is patient... not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

God did not want us to go down the road of sin that we chose. But he is always watching, waiting, working and *longing* for our return. If and when we do return, it will not matter how many times we went wrong. It will only matter that he, our loving Creator, is the one writing our story. And he is able to write a good ending for us no matter what sort of a mess we hand over to him. In the end, our story can end with him.

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Jesus loved to tell "parables" – stories that helped his hearers to understand spiritual truths. In the narrative we're looking at today, he told not one, but three parables in order to convey the same point. We're going to look at the first two.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time reflecting on these truths: God loves you and wants you to return to him so that he can forgive you. You, like every other human being in the world, have sinned. Your sin grieves God and separates you from him. Any unforgiveness of others that you may be harbouring is also a blockage in your relationship with God. God is the one who made you and loves you. He is the Great Redeemer, always ready to make a way for you to come home. Close your time of reflection with the following prayer:

We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and, for the glory of thy Name, turn from us all those evils that we most justly have deserved; and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory; through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (FROM THE LITANY, BCP, P. 36)

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LUKE 15: **THE THING THAT MAKES HEAVEN REJOICE**

¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

³So he told them this parable: ⁴“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ ⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

⁸“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”