

**Title:** A Parable of Divine Joy

**Passage:** Luke 15:11-32

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Draft Summary:

I. Grieve with God over your sin (v.11-16)

II. Repent and enter into God's joy (v.17-24)

III. Rejoice with God over repenting sinners (v.25-32)

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
  - What is your joy and delight - does it echo what God finds joy in?
  - What next steps will you take in response to the sermon?
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## **Introduction**

Question: What thrills God?

- Answer: To save sinners

Three Parables (Luke 15:1-32): common elements:

- Something precious is lost
- Someone frantically searches for it.
- There is great joy in finding it.

Luke 15:7

Just 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.

Luke 15:10

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

## **EXPOSITION**

### **Context of Passage:**

Luke 15:1-2

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

- All sorts of people were coming to hear Jesus, especially those most despised by the “religious”

## **Overview**

- I. Grieve with God over your sin (v.11-16)
- II. Repent and enter into God’s joy (v.17-24)
- III. Rejoice with God over repenting sinners (v.25-32)

### **I. GRIEVE WITH GOD OVER YOUR SIN (v.11-16)**

Luke 15:11-12

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. 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.

- younger son’s insult of request, which essentially says “you’re better to me dead than alive”
- Father should have disowned his son, yet the father granted the request by dividing his property up.

Luke 15:13

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.

- “not many days later”
  - less than a week”
- “the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country”
  - Left all that was a reminder that was associated with his father.
- “there he squandered his property in reckless living.”
  - Lived lavishly without any restraint

Luke 15:14

And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.

- a famine occurred, which was a sign of God’s gracious hand.

Luke 15:15-16

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

- A Jew ended up serving the most unclean animals under the Torah - a great humbling

## II. REPENT AND ENTER INTO GOD'S JOY (v.17-24)

Luke 15:17

"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!

- Warning: many come to their wit's end but not to the end of themselves (and continue in their mire)
- Here, revelation of the truth
  - Recognize the goodness of his father, which lavishes upon his servants.
- Hell is filled with many people who serve an invented god, who is hard.

Luke 15:18-19

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."

- The son rehearses a planned speech to his father upon his return.
- Contrast:
  - The unrepentant always weeps what they have lost.
    - At circumstances
  - The repentant always weep what they have done.
    - At sin towards God.
- "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you."
- Question: What thrills you - what's your joy and delight?
  - Do you delight in God or instead value your performance or ministry to the church?

Luke 15:20

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.

- "He rose and came to his father"

- repentance stands up and seeks reconciliation
- “But while he was still a long way off”
  - Hasn’t yet reached the town where certain shame would be expected
- “His father saw him”
  - Contrast: No one else was looking or searching for the son.
  - Why looking for him? To rebuke him? No.
    - “...and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”
- “...and ran”
  - Culture: A dignified father does not run but only walks or glides.
  - Here: father ran and disregarded any shame of running
    - An exchange of shame from the son to the father.
    - Foreshadow of how Jesus would willingly take on the shame of the cross for sinners.
- “embraced him and kissed him”
  - Father’s compassion showed upon the son.

Luke 15:21

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.’

- son begins his rehearsed speech.
  - But he doesn’t get to the part of “Treat me as one of your hired servants.”

Luke 15:22

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.

- Father interrupts the son.
- Father restores the son which provides clear symbols of sonship (best robe, ring, shoes)
- Likewise, this is a picture of what God has done for us.

Romans 5:8

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Luke 15:23

And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

- Father lavishes upon the son.
  - Contrast: the son was starving before

Luke 15:24

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

- Previously, they would have held a funeral for the son as if he died.
- Now, recognize the miracle of life that has happened.
  - Likewise, heaven rejoices when sinners repent and are adopted into God's family.

### **III. REJOICE WITH GOD OVER REPENTING SINNERS (v.25-32)**

Luke 15:25-26

"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

- Remember context: tax collectors and sinners were listening to Jesus while the religious leaders were "grumbling" and looking down upon the situation.

Luke 15:27

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.'

- the news of the son's return.

Luke 15:28

But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,

- "His father came out"
  - He came out for both the sinner and the self-righteous alike

Luke 15:29

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.

- the son's pride is clear
  - Views God only as an unfriendly slave-driver. ("I have served you")

- “You never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends”
  - Picture of religion:
    - it is all about us and not about God.

Luke 15:30

But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’

- The son’s grievance was really with the father’s rich forgiveness

Luke 15:31-32

And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

- What’s the response?
  - Older son could have said: you’re right, so glad he’s back.
- Question: Does it thrill you to see God showing grace on other people, especially those who have hurt you?
- Quote: “There are no worst natures in hell than we have.” (Thomas Watson)
  - We must celebrate the saving grace shown to sinners where God has opened the kingdom. Share in divine joy.