

surprised by

hope

WEEK 3 - THE HEART OF OUR FATHER

OVERVIEW

In one of his most famous parables, Jesus tells the story of two lost sons who have separated themselves from their father. One is a “prodigal” who leaves home and squanders his inheritance. The other is a faithful, obedient son, but one who rejects his father’s grace when his brother returns home to a loving and unquestioned welcome. The heart’s desire of the father for both of his sons in this parable gives us a powerful insight into the heart of God to be reconciled with humanity. Whether we have squandered what he has given us or whether we find ourselves out in the cold in our rejection of his true character, the invitation is always there for us to return to our surprisingly loving Father.

We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life!

He was lost, but now he is found!

Luke 15:32

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you had a personal "prodigal" or "lost son" experience? Share this part of your story with your group.
2. Read [Luke 15:11-32](#). Why is it important to consider the context (the rest of the chapter) and the world behind the text (customs and practices during Jesus' time) of this parable?
3. In verse 17, the younger son "*finally came to his senses*" and eventually returned to his father. What does it mean to you that no one talked him into going home?
4. Why does Jesus include an older brother in this parable? How would the message be different if there was only one son?
5. What can we learn about the heart of our father from this parable?
6. Maron mentioned that other parables of the time would end when the son was destitute and realized he was wrong. How would you compare that type of parable to Jesus' parable of the lost son?
7. Maron said that "hope is alive because God is alive". How have you seen God at work in a way that gives you hope?

RESOURCES

gracechurch.us