

You gotta read this. It is the best short story ever

Bible passage

Luke 15: 11-32 *Parable of the Lost Son*

18 I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. (NirV)

Devotion

Many consider the parable of the lost (prodigal) son as the best short story ever told. Jesus tells this parable after the Pharisees and religious leaders accuse him of welcoming and eating with sinners.

The parable begins with a young man (represents sinners), the younger of two sons, who asks his father (represents God) to give him his share of the estate. The parable continues by describing how the younger son travels to a distant country on a self-discovery mission. He lost all his money in wild living. He lost all his values because he practiced free sex. He lost all his dignity because a Jew who looked after pigs was condemned by his fellow countrymen. His urge to eat the food of pigs was the lowest point to which a Jew could stoop. Furthermore, he also lost his right and claim to be acknowledged as a son.

The young man had bumped his head very hard. But there was one thing he could not lose—his father's love. This time, the young man did not long for what was in his father's hand but what was in his father's heart. The story's turning point is in verse 17, when he came to his senses. He decided to confess his sins to his father and to God. His father welcomed him back and threw a huge party. This parable tells us that God will always forgive you – no matter what you have done. Jesus wanted to tell the Pharisees that Jesus loves sinners (but not sin).

Prayer

Lord, help me to be honest in confessing my sins to You and to others.

Today's Quote

The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.

—Saint Augustine

the father's heart

If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is – but not in this case

Bible passage

Luke 15: 11-32 *Parable of the Lost Son*

20 'While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him. (NIRV)

Devotion

The youngest son, who messed up, must have returned home with a fearful heart, wondering: *What will my father say?* Yet it is interesting to note that the father did five things before he even said *anything* to him. According to verse 20, these five reactions were:

1. He saw his son while he was still a long way off – which means that he had waited for him all the time!
2. He pitied him deeply – his eyes were not filled with anger but with tears.
3. He ran to meet him – he took the initiative.
4. He embraced him – the prodigal son experienced unconditional love.
5. He kissed him – this was considered undignified conduct for an Oriental father, but it did not bother him to act in this way because the news about his son's return was overwhelming.

In this manner, the father eased his son's final steps on his return. When his son expressed remorse (v. 21), the father did not answer directly but arranged a feast for him. The father's actions indicated that he had forgiven his son. God is the father who always rejoices when someone who went astray returns home, shows remorse and confesses.

Prayer

Lord, I want to praise You for showing me so much mercy.

Today's Quote

Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

–Oscar Wilde

a feast

Not about good or bad but about humility or pride

Bible passage

Luke 15: 11-32 *Parable of the Lost Son*

32 "But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." (NirV)

Devotion

The eldest son's bitter reaction stood in stark contrast to his father's joy. The eldest son felt that his younger brother did not deserve the festivities, because he had squandered all his money on prostitutes. He was bitter because he had been a loyal son all those years and yet did not receive festive recognition for it.

Jesus wants to show the Pharisees (the audience) that they are lost, not in spite of their goodness but because of their goodness. They use their goodness as self-justification. The eldest son uses moral conformity (goodness) to get to his father's wealth and status. The youngest son (sinners) uses self-discovery (sins) to get to his father's stuff. Both sons are lost. The youngest son is lost in his lostness and the elder son is lost in his goodness. Self-discovery and moral conformity can never save you. It doesn't go deep enough to take you to the father's heart. How can we be saved?

1. We need the initiating love of the Father (Luke 15: 20, 28)
2. We need to repent of our sins as well as the wrong reasons why we do good.
3. We need to be melted and moved at what it costs the Father to bring us back home.

Prayer

Lord, I want to show by my way of living that I love You.

Today's Quote

Hurt leads to bitterness, bitterness to anger, travel too far that road and the way is lost.

—Terry Brooks

be saved