

You Lost, Bro?

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[0 : 0 0] Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes grumbled, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.! So he told them this parable.

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? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. 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.

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? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.

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

[1 : 1 7] And he divided his property between them. 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.

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

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.

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 and kissed him.

[2 : 1 6] 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. 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, and bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And they began to celebrate. 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. 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.

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

But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him. And he said to him, Son, you were always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

[3 : 25] It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found. All right. I was not joking about the quiz.

So now, let's test our active listening. So in the third parable, the prodigal son parable, how many characters, how many main characters are there?

Kids, this is a softball question. Do you know how many main characters are there? Say it loud. Three. Three. That's right. Can you name them?

The son. Brother and father. Yes. There is a father, there is a older son, and there is a younger son.

Three. That was the easy one. Next question. There was some groups of people gathering around Jesus in the beginning. What are the groups of people gathering around Jesus at the beginning of this?

[4 : 37] Yeah. And? That's good. That's, we're halfway there. Anyone else? Help Sylvia out. Hey.

Oh, your Bible's not open. I thought you were cheating. Okay. Notes. Notes. All right. What do you got? Sinners. Mm-hmm. One more group.

There's four. What? There's disciples. Nope. Well, not listed. There's four. We got, we got scribes and Pharisees, right?

We've got sinners, and there's one more group. I'll help you out. There's tax collectors.

Yeah. All right. Okay. So there's four groups, and those, those four groups of people, that's really, there's two groups. They're given in pairs. Right? So there's sinners.

[5 : 38] Those are people that are not interested or not keeping the standard of the law. There's tax collectors, which are, are Jews that were given authority by Rome, and they were really looked down on by the, by the rest of the Jews because they exploited the Jews for their own gain.

So that's one group. There's sinners and tax collectors. And then there's scribes and Pharisees. So scribes were people who studied and knew and wrote down the law.

So they were really into keeping the standards and teaching also. And then Pharisees, they were known for their strict adherence to the, to the law.

Right? So we've got these four groups. Now here's the harder question. This is the last one. If you pass this, we'll move on. Otherwise, we'll read it a couple more times.

No. Did anybody catch what prompted Jesus to say this series of three parables? They were asking him why he was being with the sinners and why?

[6 : 50] Yes. Yeah, I don't know if that's what they were like, shaking their heads, but yes. They, they said, they said, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

And that's what prompted the, the next parable. So we're going to keep those things kind of in the back of our mind and you can go ahead and open your Bibles if you have them.

We're in Luke chapter 15. Um, and, you know, if, when Jesus heard that, if that was like a comment section on your social media feed of choice, then, then the scribes and Pharisees, that would be like a troll comment right there.

And we know that it's good practice not to engage with every comment that you see on social media, but Jesus did decide to pick this one up and comment.

And so that's what we're going to look. So it's, it's good practice not to respond to every critical comment, but he does choose to engage. And his invitation here, this, these parables are an invitation to reconsider their understanding of lostness and their view of God and how Jesus fits right in between those two.

[8 : 07] So we'll jump right into the text. Luke 15, starting in verse 11, it says, 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. So right away in verse 12, we see a demand. The younger son makes a demand on the father. He's asking to receive his inheritance right now.

And that's unusual and it should grab our attention right away. Jesus doesn't waste any time here. So another question for the kids. Anybody know what an inheritance is? Boy, daily kids, you're on it.

What do we got? What's an inheritance? It's basically like when your parents save some stuff that you have and they throw up and they give it to you and they save it responsibly.

Yeah. It's their stuff given to you. Now, Owen, do you know when you would get an inheritance? When would that happen? When you're older?

[9 : 10] And there's usually something that happens first. Do you know what that is? Yeah. Yeah. Usually, we don't like to think about that too much.

But usually, the parents pass away and once they're gone, then their things are given to the next generation. And that's true today.

So, we wouldn't expect a son to ask for his inheritance while the father's alive. That's surprising, number one. And number two, the younger son initiates the distribution.

So, a firstborn son didn't have, a firstborn son had the right. They would have been seen as the important son. And here we see the younger one step up and to push his will on his family.

So, that's two unusual things that we see. And in doing this, the son is essentially saying to the father, I have no use for you. Just give me what I want and I'll be on my way.

[10 : 09] The father has no value to the son outside of his wealth. So, the son would rather treat his father as if he were dead. And I think that's a heavy statement. So, we'll just, like, let's consider that.

That the son would rather see, or he'd rather treat his father as if he were dead. dead. And I can hear Tim's objection. He's probably saying, Mike, he's just giving his stuff away.

He doesn't, I think you're reading too much into this. And I'm glad you asked that, Tim. That was an astute question. But, in our translation, it says the word property in that sentence.

And the root word underneath that in Greek is bios. And that means, in this specific example, well, the word bios means life. And in this example, it means the resources needed to maintain life, or the means of subsistence.

And we'll see the same word property get used later, and it's not the same Greek word underneath it. The word that gets used later just means stuff, just means things. So, in this sentence, when the father divides his property, it has an elevated sense to it, and we should see that extra value of him dividing himself.

[11 : 29] He's literally tearing his life, his livelihood apart, and dividing himself between his two sons. He's willingly reducing his ability to provide for himself and his family, and that includes the older brother as well.

So, back in the day, people didn't use banks like they do today, and so most people's wealth was in things. Like land, goats, cattle, that kind of stuff.

So, the father would have had to sell off at least some of those assets in order to get some money together to give to the son, just to send him off, basically.

And verse 12 says, I'll just remind us, it says, and he divided his property between them. So, the father quietly complies with the son's request because of his love for him.

can you imagine, just put yourself in the father's shoes now, can you imagine the pain of rejection the father must feel, and he doesn't speak up or correct the son, he just lets him go, and his son is lost.

[12 : 34] So, just like Ryan said a need to breathe song earlier, just like need to breathe also says elsewhere, it says bad decisions, they don't feel bad at the time.

verse 13 says, not many days later the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey into a far country and there he squandered his property in reckless living.

So, the younger son goes off and he yucks it up and has a good old time and he recklessly spends everything in pursuit of what feels good. And while this story is a story that Jesus crafted to teach, he's using a literary device, it's called a representative character.

And that's one person that's either real or fictitious, in this case it's fictitious, it's a made up character, and that one person is used to represent the traits, struggles, or values of a larger group.

And the Bible uses that cover to cover everywhere. So it's not new, I just want to point out that that's what he's doing, because we want to start thinking in that category today.

[13 : 39] So instead of just saying representative character, I'm going to call him a type. So parables are stories that Jesus told to make people think. So let's think.

What sort of person is a younger brother type? It's someone who pursues meaning in life by doing what seems fun, or what feels right. They're pleasure seekers, they're often not committed to following God, you could say that they're irreligious, and they also, you might describe them as being a bit of a rebel or maybe a free spirit.

I don't really know what that means, but I think you've heard that before probably. So the big thing is that they tend to make their decisions on feelings or emotions.

A younger brother type isn't typically too worried about doing what's right. And I want you to notice that it's easy to see the lostness of a younger brother type.

It's just readily on display. They don't hide it. They don't mask it. And similar to last week, quick disclaimer, Jeremy mentioned four types of soil. This is the same thing.

[14 : 50] We don't want to start looking around the room and taking the inventory of people. People don't fit into one type or another. It's not an identity.

It's a behavior. So when we're listing types today, just remember it's a behavior. It's not something that defines them and makes them. into a box or something.

And further, it's a range. This behavior is on a spectrum. So if you're going to look around the room, look at your own heart first. That's the first place to go.

So the younger son set out on his own way, and he squandered all that he had in reckless living. So verse 14 through 16, it says, when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need.

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

- [15 : 53] So our younger brother is in a tight spot, and whether you think he brought it upon himself or not, it's hard to think about how bad it's going to get for him. But we can't look away, or we'll miss something important.

Jesus wants us to see that he has found something incredibly valuable, but it's something that he couldn't have bought. In fact, it took him running out of all of his wealth to find. He's found need.

So need is the first visible sign that we can see that he's beginning to think clearly. So when God works in our hearts to draw us to himself, the first thing we experience is a need for something better, or more precisely, someone better.

The lost younger son is far from home, he's far from flourishing, and far from the father. He has sought to make his own road through life, but is now realizing that his road has given way underneath him.

His way is hopeless. His need is a recognition that he needs an altogether different road. So Proverbs 14 tells us, there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

- [17 : 10] Need gives way to recognizing our lostness. It gives us the ability to see that if we continue on the road we're on, the end of the road isn't what we had planned for ourselves.

The proverb tells it like it is. If we continue to make decisions based on our emotions or feelings like a younger brother type would, that ultimately won't lead to anything good.

It's an incredibly low point for our prodigal bro, but right here he's met with mercy, and it's a severe mercy. It's a painful reality that his decisions to separate from the father and go on his own way has brought him into this suffering.

But it's mercy because he's recognized his need, and that's the beginning step to finding the road that will return to the father. But it's still going to get a little worse.

So the son's aware of his need, but he doesn't yet know what to do with it. So he gets a job feeding pigs and finds himself wishing that he would eat what the pigs are eating.

- [18 : 15] And, you know, I like, I don't think feeding pigs would be a bad gig. I think pigs are just fine. I like to eat them. Pork chops, good.

You know, bacon, you like bacon? It's good. Carnitas, that's pork tacos, very good, real good. But, this parable wasn't originally written to me, and so let's just remember who he's directing it towards.

It's the scribes and the Pharisees, and they don't share my view of the poor sign. persuasion. They, under the law, pigs were unclean, absolutely never on the menu.

They would have been just absolutely disgusted. But there's some space, there's some space between need and action, and we see that here in our younger brother.

So, it's possible that he didn't even realize how bad things had gotten until he was sitting there wanting to eat this gross pig food surrounded by what he would consider to be an unclean animal as well.

- [19 : 25] And it's at that point where his, where he comes to himself, it says. And he didn't, he now knows something he didn't need, he now knows something he didn't know before.

If his situation has any hope of improving, he'll need to turn away from the road he's chosen and turn back towards his father. father. So, verse 17 says, 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. So, he's come to the conclusion that we've hoped for, that he needs to return to the father. And some people have speculated that his desire to be treated as one of the servants is motivated by a desire to pay back the inheritance that he squandered.

So, the inheritance would have possibly been up to a third of everything that the father had based on the law. Could you imagine trying to pay back this immense debt on the pay of a servant?

Good luck with that. It's not going to happen. Grab yourself a Snickers. It's going to be a while. So, he knows he's out of the family.

[20 : 42] But it's an earnest attempt to do what's within his ability to atone for what he's done. And deep down, whether he admits it or not, to himself, he knows it's a debt that he can't afford.

So, as the son's going home, he rehearses what he'll say to the father if he's able to make it back to him. Verse 18 and 19. It says, 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. And when the son finally nears home, he won't have a chance to tell the father what he's been rehearsing.

Let's look at what happens in 20. It says, But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 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. 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, and bring the fattened calf and kill it.

[21 : 43] And let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And they began to celebrate. The father runs out to the son and cuts off his rehearsed words.

The father receives his son back. And it's full restoration. It's a beautiful picture of mercy and grace and love meeting the broken son on the road.

But back then, a father, the patriarch of a family, they wouldn't run. It's unheard of. It's undignified. We would maybe say that it's a bad look.

It's just something that you don't do. But the surprising thing is that this father does. So remember that when he divided up the belongings, that rejection that he felt, he wanted the rejection that his son wanted nothing to do with him.

And the shame that he would have felt from the community around him. Friends and neighbors would have certainly known about this rejection. Remember, he had to sell off a bunch of stuff. So that wouldn't have escaped the local town gossip.

[22 : 56] So what kind of love would make a dignified patriarch run to his lost son? Especially after he's felt all the shame and rejection. It's the kind of love that does not insist on its own way, but rejoices with the truth.

The kind of love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. The love and mercy shown by the father in this parable is category melting for the people that would have heard it originally.

So scribes and Pharisees are law keepers, and they were probably thinking about the law at the time. So Deuteronomy 21, I'm not going to read it, I'm just going to paraphrase it.

If you wanted to read it, it's verses 18 through 21. It talks about a rebellious son. But basically, if a father has a rebellious son who doesn't listen or respond to discipline, he can take him to the town leaders, and then all the men in the city will stone him.

To death. Doesn't that just feel a little different than what's happening in our story? So Jesus is offering an image of grace instead of judgment.

[24 : 10] While the son is a long way off, the father runs to him. He says, for this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And that, it's a beautiful picture of sin and loss and it's being turned into celebration.

But, if we stop here, we're really going to sell ourselves short of what Jesus was trying to teach the group that he was addressing, the scribes and the Pharisees. While the father's love and mercy would have seemed unheard of to anyone that heard this parable, the sin and losses of the younger brother wouldn't have really been anything new to them.

So, in the last third of the parable, he turns the spotlight onto another type. Verse 25 says, 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. 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.

So the elder brother was heading home and heard the place was rocking. And the servant shares the good news about his brother returning. And this would have been quite a party. We don't know quite for, we don't know for sure how many people would have been invited, but I like to do a little back of the napkin estimating.

[25 : 34] And we know one thing, right? We know that they killed the fattened calf. So here we go. Let's do a little estimating. Are you ready? You look ready, Alice. So, do you guys know classically trained French chef Julia Child?

Anybody know Julia Child? So she suggests, look it up. She suggests when serving her preparation of beef bourguignnet, which is a stew, that you should plan to serve one half pound of good quality boneless stewing beef per guest.

Right? So some quick math here, and knowing there's no refrigerator to store the leftovers, if the calf weighed around 800 pounds, which is pretty conservative, it's well below today's average, we would expect the guest list to be at least 720 people.

That's a ridiculous example. Beef bourguignnet. Why would they make a French stew? But that's not the point. The point is, it's not just inviting some neighbors over for some hot dogs.

It's a whole community type of invitation. It's a celebration feast of the father's joy, or finding his lost son, and he's pulled out all the stops. What type of event do you think would have enough value to you that you would invite 700 people?

[27 : 00] I don't even know 700 people, I don't think. And I just want to point out, this is just an aside, but any shame that the father felt or carried from the community about his son, it didn't stop him from throwing this hoe down.

I'm trying to see how many different ways I can label a party here. So in light of the scale of this feast, let's look at how the older brother responds.

Let's turn to verse 28. But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, Look, these many years I have served you, and I have never disobeyed your command.

You never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.

So his comments expose his heart and shows us what an elder brother type is. He resents the father's decision to welcome back his lost brother.

[28 : 09] The same brother that squandered a third of everything, the same brother that treated his father as though he were dead. The older brother resents the father's love for his brother.

The older brother is surrounded by abundance and yet can only see his scarcity. He's put in his time, he's served the father, and has never disobeyed him. And he expects that his good actions will result in blessings from the father.

And when he doesn't receive them, what happens? He's angry, he's bitter, and he's resentful. It exposes that his doing good was never out of true love for the father.

It was always just a means to an end. So an elder brother type then roots their self-image in, could be any number of things, but it could be being hardworking, belonging to the right community, their intelligence, their education, or their moral superiority.

They do what is expected by society or family or commanded by God, but they don't do it out of a motive of love.

[29 : 19] They do it because they wanted the blessings that come from it. They often work very hard to get themselves in position of authority and work very hard to be visible in their community.

They want to be highly regarded. They can be self-righteous and judgmental to others, and they see their good behavior as a merit for receiving blessings, that it's their right.

They simply believe that good works should equal the good life. And I have a quote for us. Tim Keller put it like this. He says, it's a shocking message. Careful obedience to God's law might serve as a strategy for rebelling against God.

And I think he hit it right on the head. It's surprising because outwardly they're honoring God by doing the right thing, but inwardly it's an intentional strategy that ironically stands in opposition to God.

On the surface, it looks like these two types of brothers couldn't be more opposite. And if we only look at outward actions, they really are opposites.

[30 : 27] One does good, and one does bad. But ironically, their hearts want the same thing. They want autonomy from God. The elder brother doesn't really want a relationship with the father any more than the younger son.

Just like the younger brother, he doesn't love the father on his own terms. His love of the father is out of obligation so he can receive the good things the father can provide.

They want the father's blessings without the father. It's easy to see the lostness of a younger brother. It usually shows up in their actions. But both brothers are lost.

It's just that for an elder brother type, lostness doesn't show up as much externally as it does in their hearts. Their intentions, though, really are the same. At their core, both of these diverging roads through life results in lostness.

And that lostness comes from the same place. And that's sin. And so Jesus uses this parable to redefine sin. In that sin is not just action or inaction, but a willful separation from God.

[31 : 34] It's simultaneously pushing God away while trying to pull the blessings that come from him close. You see, sin isn't just doing something that violates God's law.

It's also the intentions or heart that's underneath the actions. And it can look like a younger son walking out on God because I don't think I need him.

But it can also look like an elder son standing outside refusing to come in because, in my view, God didn't make the right call. That I know better than God does.

That I deserve better than how God is treating me right now. That I deserve God's blessings more than my very own brother or sister in Christ.

When I read this parable, I really want to be a younger brother type. If I have to choose, that's what I want to be. I want to be quick to see my lostness.

[32 : 29] I want to feel my need for a savior. And I want to return with humility. But the reality is that I lean the other way more often than not. I lean more towards elder brother behavior.

And one of the worst parts about elder brother behavior is that it isn't easily exposed. After all, an elder brother does the right thing. But let's look how the father responds.

Verse 31, it says, 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. Just as the father deals with the younger, he deals likewise with the elder brother. He doesn't rebuke him or reprimand his behavior.

But he reminds the elder son that despite his attitude, he's still a son. While also reminding him that the same is true of the younger son, and it's appropriate that they would celebrate his return.

[33 : 30] The father shows the same love to both sons. So I think that Jesus is using these words of the father to help us, like to help the Pharisees and by extension all of us, elder brother prone types, to see what comes hard to us, to see our need.

So Jesus is extending to the scribes and Pharisees the same love that the father shows to the sons. Jesus is leading them towards the first step, seeing their need for a better road, towards seeing their need for him.

And I think he does it in two ways. First way is he shows us that forgiveness has an economic component to it. So what do I mean by that? When the younger son returns home, the father welcomes him back, not as a hired worker, but as a son.

He clothes him with a robe, a ring, and shoes. But remember in verse 12 that it says, he divided his property between them. And so whatever was not given to the younger brother belongs to the older brother.

Whether he's received it yet or not, he's entitled to that share. That's what the father said. And he again reminds the elder brother of that in verse 31, when he says, all that is mine is yours.

[34 : 59] When the father welcomed back the lost younger son, there was a cost. All of the items given to the son had to come from somewhere. And they came out of the share of the elder brother. When the father welcomes the younger son back into the family, he's fully restored as a son.

Once again entitled to all the privileges of being a son. And the cost of that was paid by our elder bro. That's how forgiveness works too.

Think about it on a person to person level. Who bears the cost associated with forgiveness? If I, Sarah's not here today. So we can talk about her.

If I seek forgiveness from my wife, Sarah, if I approach her with humility, repent of my bad actions or my improper motives, who bears the cost? It's not me.

It's her. Sarah has to give something up in order for us to be reconciled. Doesn't she? She, it might be letting go of her pride instead of holding onto the fact that she was right, which she probably was.

[36 : 05] She probably was. It could be any number of things, but the point is there's always a cost attached to forgiveness. And it's always born by the person who grants forgiveness.

And if that's true on a person to person level where both people are sinners, then how much more when we sin against God and have to repent against a perfect, or to repent to a perfect and sovereign God.

Jesus exposes us elder brother types to our need because Jesus is the only one who bears the cost, our forgiveness, for our forgiveness, to be reconciled to God.

The second way is connected with the first. Jesus shows us our need of him with the structure and the layout of these parables. By showing us that there's something missing in the lost son parable that is present in the first two.

So in the first parable, that's the lost sheep parable. The shepherd leaves the 99 to bring back the lost one sheep. There's a seeker. In the parable of the lost coin, when the woman lost one of her ten coins, what does she do?

[37 : 15] She seeks diligently until she finds it. There's a seeker. In the parable of the lost son, when the younger son is lost, what does the older brother do? Nothing.

What would we expect him to do? There's a seeker in the first two. We should see a seeker in the third. We'd expect him to go to the father and say something like this.

Father, I know you love this son of yours. I personally think he's a dope. But I can see how you love him and are grieved that he pushed you away. I'll go find him. I'll follow him.

And I'll bring him home. But he doesn't. And that should leave us wanting something better. That should leave us with a need for a better older brother.

Unfortunately, we've had this elder brother dilemma as long as we've had elder brothers. I'm not an elder brother, so it's easy for me. In birth order, I don't have a brother.

[38 : 16] It's easy for me to point this out. Remember what Cain said to God when he asked where Abel was? He said, am I my brother's keeper? The answer is yes.

He was supposed to. Of course, he knew where Abel was because it was right where he left him. So it wouldn't have been a long search.

But Jesus is saying to the scribes and Pharisees, can't you see the older brother is just as lost as the younger? He also has a need for a better road. The proverb is just as true for you, scribes and Pharisees.

There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way to death. He's saying, don't you see that you're behaving like an older brother right now?

Don't you see that you have a desperate need of a true and better older brother? An older brother that instead of driving them away by piling up shame and judgment, goes out, searches for them, and brings them back to the Father.

[39 : 17] A true older brother that will joyfully accept the burden and cost of forgiveness upon himself. Throughout his ministry, Jesus said, I am that older brother.

Come on home to the Father. He says it later in Luke, when he's talking to Zacchaeus, he says, I came to seek and to save the lost.

He explicitly said that he is our seeker. He left the Father's side and he left his position of authority. He gave up his status.

He humbled himself and became a man to collect all the lost sons and daughters of God. But he didn't just travel to a foreign country. He left heaven and came to earth. Huge downgrade.

He came and found you right where you were, on whichever road you were leading away from God, to bring you back to your senses and return you to the Father. Jesus is the true and better older brother because he willingly bears the necessary cost of forgiveness.

[40 : 23] Jesus said there are two roads that apart from him, people try to take through life. But neither one will lead to the Father. But in his mercy, he provides a way, a road through himself, through his death on the cross.

He said, dear friends, do you have a sense, do you sense your need for Jesus? Maybe you don't yet trust in Jesus, but are somewhere between sensing a need and knowing how to respond.

And that's okay. That is a beautiful mercy. Jesus, turn to Jesus and put your trust in him. He is the better way. And, maybe you already do trust in Jesus, but remember that we still have a daily need for Jesus' grace.

Remember that need is a mercy that causes us to return to him, dear brothers and sisters. Parables are stories that Jesus told to make people think. They challenge our assumptions, they shake up our expectations, and they press us to consider what we believe about God, his kingdom, and his call on our lives.

Where do you stand in relation to God in his kingdom? Recognize need, turn in repentance to God, remembering how easy it is to slip into older brother ways of thinking.

[41 : 43] Let anyone who has ears to hear, listen. Lord, I just thank you for this time today to open your word, to dig into this parable that you've given us, your exact words.

Lord, we have a need, and I just pray that you press that need into us as necessary. Lord, we confess there is only one way, and that is through you, Jesus.

In your heavenly name we pray. Amen.