

BIBLE DISCOVERY

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LUKE: Cost of Discipleship

Luke 15:11-32

We're diving back into the Gospel of Luke. After nine chapters introducing us to Jesus and His call, Luke now takes us with Him on the road to Jerusalem (Luke 9-19). Along the way, we'll hear some of Jesus' most famous teachings and stories, as He shows us what it truly costs to follow Him and why following Him is worth everything.

The Big Idea

(What is the author's point?)

What is God's posture toward sinners who repent? He lavishes His love on them and welcomes them back into the family.

Why It Matters

(Why is this relevant to us?)

I stood alone in the middle of the warehouse, head down, as my boss's boss tore into me over the phone. I had just made a mistake with a shipment that was going to cost our nonprofit tens of thousands of dollars and possibly the loss of a contract with a key partner.

The worst part? She was right.

Have you ever been there? No excuses. No spin. Just a sinking awareness that you messed up. Feeling the weight of your own failure. Wondering how you could have been so stupid. Quietly believing you don't deserve anything good from the person you let down.

That's exactly where the prodigal son finds himself in Jesus' famous parable.

We live in a world that says, "Don't be so hard on yourself." "Love yourself." "Accept yourself." But there are moments when those phrases ring hollow, because deep down, we know the truth. We've failed. Not just a little, but in ways that feel costly and real. And that's when the best you can do is brace yourself for the consequences.

That's what makes Jesus' story so shocking.

He doesn't portray God as a harsh boss or a disappointed parent keeping score. He portrays Him as a father who runs toward his failed child with joy.

And we cannot lose that image. Because no matter how long you've followed Jesus, you will drift. You will fail. Discouragement will come. And when it does, you will need this reminder: God's Grace is not cautious or calculated. It's not hesitant or reluctant. It is radical, eager and running straight toward you.

Good to Know

(What are some helpful insights into this passage?)

"Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him" (15:12). Jesus tells this story in response to religious people grumbling about Him welcoming sinners. This parable confronts their assumptions about who belongs.

"Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me" (15:12). In that culture, this is essentially saying, "I wish you were dead." It's a shocking act of rejection.

"He divided his property between them" (15:12). The father splits the inheritance between both sons. The older son would have received a double portion (Deut. 21:17), meaning this request cost the father dearly.

"He took a journey into a far country" (15:13). This represents distance not just geographically, but spiritually. The prodigal son wanted to get as far away from his father as possible.

"He squandered his property in reckless living" (15:13). The word "prodigal" is the Latin term for squander.

"...to feed pigs" (15:15). This would have been especially degrading for a Jewish audience. Pigs were unclean (Lev. 11:7). This was his "rock bottom."

"He came to himself" (15:17). Repentance begins with clarity. God turns the light on so we see reality as it truly is.

"I will arise and go to my father" (15:18-19). He prepares a speech to earn his way back...notice he thinks like a servant, not a son.

"He ran..." (15:20). Middle Eastern patriarchs did not run. This is an undignified, grace-filled sprint toward restoration.

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you" (15:21-22). The father interrupts his speech and never lets him finish asking to be a servant.

"robes, rings and shoes" (15:22) are symbols of full reinstatement.

"Bring the fattened calf and kill it" (15:23). This was reserved for major celebrations. His homecoming sparks a block party!

“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (15:24). The father defines lostness as death and salvation as resurrection.



**THIS WEEK'S
Bible Discovery Author**
Pastor Ryan Morrison

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. How would you describe/define a prodigal?
2. What could have motivated the younger son in verse 22 to reject and leave his father?
3. Is there any way we are tempted to do the same?
4. What does this passage teach us about sin?
5. What do we learn about God and His heart?

Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for welcoming us back even when we turn away from you. Even when we reject you, thank you for forgiving us and being full of grace and mercy and never-ending love. Help us to keep our eyes fixed and focused on you. We love you and adore you. Amen.