

Being One, Part 3:
Homecoming
Hennie Swart

LUKE 15.1-2 (NIV)

¹Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” ³Then Jesus told them this parable:

LUKE 15.11-24 (NIV)

¹¹Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

LUKE 15.11-24 (NIV)

¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

LUKE 15.11-24 (NIV)

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’

LUKE 15.11-24 (NIV)

²⁰“So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

LUKE 15.11-24 (NIV)

²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

LUKE 15.25-32 (NIV)

²⁵“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

LUKE 15.25-32 (NIV)

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

LUKE 15.25-32 (NIV)

³¹“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

OUTLINE

- The need for Homecoming
- The price for Homecoming
- The celebration of Homecoming

LONGING FOR HOME

...the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name... Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them.

LONGING FOR HOME

These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

THE OLDER BROTHER

During the war in Vietnam, Army Lieutenant Daniel Dawson's reconnaissance plane went down over the Vietcong jungle. When his brother Donald heard the report, he sold everything he had, left his wife with \$20, and bought passage to Vietnam. There he equipped himself with a soldier's gear and wandered through the guerilla-controlled jungle, looking for his brother. He carried leaflets picturing the plane and describing in Vietnamese the reward for news of the missing pilot. He became known as "brother of the pilot". A Life magazine reporter described his perilous search.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is the true older brother who gladly pays the price and shares His inheritance with us.
