

08-09-2026 Message



1 Group

Start Theme Slide

¹Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.

²This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!

Luke 15:1-2 (NLT)

2

Luke 15:1-2 (NLT)

TWO LOST SONS

- Two crowds around Jesus
- Irreligious sinners and religious leaders

3

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 15:11-32 (NIV)

4

Luke 15:11-32 (NIV) 1 of 8

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 15:11-32 (NIV)

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants 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 servants.’

Luke 15:11-32 (NIV)

²⁰So 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 15:11-32 (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 15:11-32 (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 15:11-32 (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.

Luke 15:11-32 (NIV)

³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’
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.’ ”

Luke 15:11-32 (NIV)

11

Luke 15:11-32 (NIV) Last of 8



Two sons
represent two
ways of being
separated
from God.

12

TWO SONS = TWO FACES OF SIN:

- Sin isn't only rebellion, indulgence, immorality. (younger son)
- Sin is also pride, judgmentalism, anger, and moral superiority — sin hiding inside obedience. (older son)

13

The two sons represent two ways we try to be our own savior and lord: by being very bad, or by being very good.

14

The parable = a story in two acts:

15

Act One: The Younger Son (Luke
15:11-24)

16



The younger
son's sin = self-
absorption and
outward rebellion.

17

The request:

18

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.

Luke 15:11-12 (NIV)

19

Luke 15:11-12 (NIV)

The far country and the crash:

20

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.

¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

Luke 15:13-16 (NIV)

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 15:13-16 (NIV)

Coming to his senses:

23

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said,
‘How many of my father’s hired servants
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.

Luke 15:17-20 (NIV)

24

Luke 15:17-20 (NIV) 1 of 2

¹⁹ 'I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'

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.

Luke 15:17-20 (NIV)

25

Luke 15:17-20 (NIV) Last of 2



The younger son is honest
about three things:

1. Honest about the choices he made
2. Honest about his sin
3. Honest about the consequences of his sin

26

¹⁸Father, 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 servants.'

Luke 15:18-19 (NIV)

27

Luke 15:18-19 (NIV)

The father's response:

28

²⁰“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 15:20-24 (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 15:20-24 (NIV)



The irony of this story is that the outwardly rebellious son is the one who is reconciled with the father. Why is that?

31

³¹ Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Matthew 21:31b-32 (NIV)

32

Matthew 21:31-32 (NIV)

⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

33

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

⁵He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Titus 3:5-6 (NIV)

34

Titus 3:5-6 (NIV)

Act Two: The Elder Brother (Luke 15:25-32)

35



The older brother's
sin = pride, self-
righteousness and
judgmentalism

36

The climax of the story is the debate between the father and the older son.
This story is less about prodigals than about Pharisees. It's a warning to good, moral people.

37



The elder brother is doing everything "right," fulfilling all outward duty, yet he is just as alienated from the father as his brother was.

38

The older son's reaction:

39

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 15:25-28 (NIV)

40

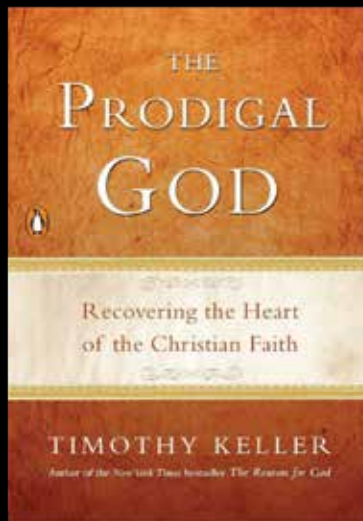
Luke 15:25-28 (NIV) 1 of 2

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

Luke 15:25-28 (NIV)

41

Luke 15:25-28 (NIV) Last of 2



“Sin is not just breaking the rules, it is putting yourself in the place of God as Savior, Lord, and Judge.

”
Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God*

42

His complaint:

43

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.

Luke 15:28-30 (NIV)

44

Luke 15:28-30 (NIV) 1 of 2

³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

Luke 15:28-30 (NIV)

45

Luke 15:28-30 (NIV) Last of 2

The two sons are more alike than they first appear. Like the younger son, the older son wanted the father's things, not the father himself. He obeyed to get, not because he loved his father.

46

“
Jesus is pleading not so much with immoral outsiders as with moral insiders. He wants to show them their blindness, narrowness, and self-righteousness, and how these things are destroying both their own souls and the lives of the people around them.
”
Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God*

47

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

48

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

The father's response:

49

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.’ ”

Luke 15:31-32 (NIV)

50

Luke 15:31-32 (NIV)

The parable ends on a cliffhanger — we're never told if the elder brother goes in. Jesus leaves it open, aimed pointedly at His listening audience.

51

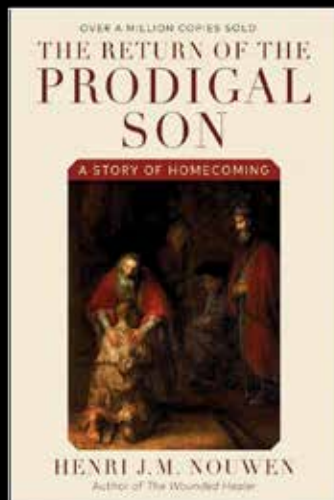
WHICH OF THE TWO BROTHERS IS THE BIGGEST SINNER?

- The younger brother's sin is more obvious.
- Which of the two has a more difficult time seeing himself as a sinner?
- Which brother, as far as we know, did not repent?

52

The irony of the story is that those who seem closest to God can in fact be further from Him — and less aware of their need for Him — than those whose lives are visibly a mess.

53



“ I had to make the leap over a wall of resentment and find the forgiving father... [and] guard my heart against becoming the elder brother who is sour, bitter, and judgmental of grace.

”
Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

54



Who do you identify with?

- Younger son: represents looking for fulfillment and joy apart from God.
- Elder son: represents those of us who try to earn our salvation and are quick to judge others.

55

Which sin do you need to repent of:
Rebellion and self-indulgence, or
resentment and judgmentalism?

56

“There are two things you need to do to be a Christian. First, you have to repent of your sin. But that alone isn't enough, because even the Pharisees did that. In addition, you have to repent of your self-righteousness.”

George Whitfield, *The Method of Grace*

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58 Group

End Theme Slide