

The Love of the Father

Lent

[Luke 15:1-3, 11-32](#)

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!

³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

REFLECTION

In this passage, we can each identify to some degree with the prodigal son - through selfishness, out-of-control behavior, or extravagance. **How can you identify with him?** As he does in v. 17, we eventually wake up to our own behavior. **What have been your breaking points that have caused you to "come to yourself?"**

We should also consider how the older brother lives in each of us, when our virtuous nature causes us to quickly judge others. This is especially deadly for us when we become too self-focused trying to achieve goals and live a more Christian life. [Henri Nouwen wrestles](#) with how deeply rooted this form of "lostness" is and how difficult it is to return home. **How does the older son live in you?**

Rembrandt brings the most light to the character of the father [in his famous painting](#). Running to greet his son in what would have been an undignified manner for someone of his status, the father displays a prodigal, lavish, out-of-control love. It's not enough to identify which son we are more like and work from there - we're each called to be the father. The way we become this love is to reflect on how we've received this love. **How has the prodigal love and grace of God encountered you?**

Heavenly Father, may we reflect on our own stories of mercy and compassion this week, seeking to be your witness in this hurting, wandering world. Amen.