

Luke 15: The Lost Son

Read Luke 15:11-20

Notice how this story intentionally follows the same pattern as the lost sheep and the lost coin:

- It focuses on one central person.
- That person has lost something precious.
- He focuses on what is lost until it is found. He doesn't give up.
- When the lost is found, He calls everyone around him to celebrate with him.

But now the lost is not a piece of property, but a person. Now the story hits us at a deeper level. Many of us have someone whom we love dearly who is "lost" to us. Now we feel the pain of the father even more.

The lostness is different as well. The lost person has a will of his own, and the father may even know exactly where he is. Then in what sense is he lost?

- The son is lost in a spiritual sense. He doesn't see his own life situation or where he is headed. He has lost his way.
- The son is lost to his father. The son has intentionally placed himself outside the father's care and fellowship. The father has lost his relationship with his son. In this case, the loss is even more painful because the son has in essence said to his father, "I can't wait for you to die. Give me what will be mine when you die, and I'll separate from you now."

When property is lost, one can set aside everything else and look thoroughly until the lost is found. But what do we do when a person is lost to us - a person with a will of his own? We cannot go looking for him. We cannot set aside everything in our life until he is found. But our heart doesn't move on and doesn't give up until he returns.

We're told nothing about the father's actions while his son was gone, but his reaction upon his son's return tells us everything:

*While he was still a long way off, his father
saw him and
felt compassion for him, and
ran and
embraced him and
kissed him. (Luke 15:20, NASB)*