

# What's Next

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Date: 09 October 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] That honestly make you want to scratch your head a little bit, wonder. One of those times was when he turned the tables, actually two of those times. The Synoptic Gospels tells us, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke, they wrote very similarly, tells us about Christ turning the tables at the end of his ministry.

When John mentions it, it's at the beginning of his ministry. Both times, it was shocking that he did that. We picture in our mind Jesus being the one that has the lamb on his shoulders, that greets the children when they come, and that's exactly who he is, healing others with a touch.

We don't think of him turning those tables. But he does physically, but he also does mentally. And even more than that, he does spiritually.

He'll turn the tables in your life if you'll listen to him. He'll work and move in you. And that's what happens in Luke chapter 15. Now, some of you may know that I preached on Luke 15 last week, and some of you may not, even though you were here.

I remember years ago, an older pastor told me, he said, all you need is five years worth of sermons, and when you're done with those five years, you start over again. I said, I've had long tenures, you know.

[ 1 : 26 ] And I said, people, I wouldn't do that, but even if I did, they would remember those. And he said, they don't remember what you preached last week. So, maybe not.

I want to look at Luke 15 again, and I'll just be honest, I don't care to rehash. And I don't aim it, folks. I'll let the text take care of it.

And I'm not trying to insult your intelligence or waste your time by dealing with this parable again. I want to show you something this morning. There's a part two here that you cannot miss.

You have to catch the context of all of Luke chapter 15. Jesus is taking in, loving on folks, building relationships with folks that church folk don't like.

And the Pharisees and the scribes say, this man is the one that receives sinners. He even eats with them. And Jesus does not buck that comment.

[ 2 : 37 ] Instead, he responds to it. By explaining God's reaction to the lost. And by the way, when we say that people are lost without Christ, that's where this comes from.

This is the biblical basis for such a comment. He tells the story of the lost sheep. A man lost one sheep. He left 99 to go look for it. He was never satisfied with just the 99.

He celebrated over the fact that he found the lost sheep. And he said, in the same way, heaven rejoices to hear such. And when the Pharisees and scribes heard him say that, they rejoiced as well.

It was bowling right down their alley. They liked it. They didn't like him eating with sinners, but praise God, God receives them. He then speaks of lost money and how the lady swept the house looking for one coin, even though she had nine others just like it.

A few years ago, I arrived at a high school football game before it was to start, and I was talking to somebody. And Abby was standing right there with us, and she looked down on a muddy ground and found clean money just laying there, right there between us.

[ 3 : 55 ] It was four very new and folded \$20 bills. Money from heaven had fell. I told her, I said, go put it in the little booster booth over there, and if somebody comes and claims it, then, you know, they lost their money.

It's not yours. But if nobody claims it by halftime, you can have it. You know? They ain't lost it by halftime. They ain't gonna get it. They did not.

And when I went back to try to remember which child this had happened to, Abby confessed to me. She didn't even realize she confessed. She said, I put 40 in the booster to see if anybody would

claim it.

So anyway, she didn't even turn all the money in. But anyway. Nobody came, and she went back and got the money.

I was public address announcing. I snuck out of the booth and went down to the concession stand to get something to drink to get me through halftime, and I reached in my pocket, and I had no money.

[ 5 : 12 ] The \$100 bill I had broke at lunchtime and put the change in my pocket was gone. Abby had retrieved that clean money on that money because I had just dropped it.

So I did not want to take the zeal away from Abby who had just found that money and was so excited about it by telling her it was mine.

For one, she'd probably still be bitter this day and think I was lying. So I did as any good dad does. I negotiated with her to buy stuff that I was already gonna have to buy on her behalf, and we worked it out, and I told her well after the fact that when a teenager finds \$80 clean dollars on a muddy ground, she feels like it's time to kill the fatted calf or to buy a Louie or a golden goose or whatever it is the latest overpriced trap is.

It's fun to find stuff. Just like when a soul is found. And people love a story about finding money, and then Jesus goes again, and he shares another.

And I want to warn you, this one's a little more controversial. It's Luke chapter 15, verse 11. And it says, And he said there was a man who had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, Father, give me the share of property that's coming to me.

[ 6 : 47 ] He divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living.

When he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into the field to feed pigs.

And he was longing to feed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger.

I will arise and go to my father, and I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants. And he arose and came to his father, but while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And the son said to him, Father, I've sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring quickly the best robe. Put it on him, put a ring on his hand, shoes on his feet, and bring the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate.

[ 8 : 03 ] For this my son was dead, and thank God is alive again. Lost and is found. And they began to celebrate. Praise the Lord, a boy came home.

The lost has been saved, and the Pharisees and the scribes like that story too, but let me tell you what they were thinking. The part about the father running, what's that about?

I mean, if that's to be the God, the father, he's not running to meet anybody. Bless God, you crawl to get to his throne, especially the lousy lost, you know, them people.

That's what the Pharisees and the scribes were thinking. Those people that are not like us. So they're not so sure about what he's saying anymore. These people don't even deserve to come before God with all their wickedness.

Blowing money, sleeping around, picking up odd jobs, begging, or near about that. But Jesus isn't done because I want to remind you of the context in which he speaks.

[ 9 : 18 ] It's found in verse 2, and it says, and the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. And I'm just going to tell you that when Jesus got wind of them saying such as that, it set him off.

And he's about to turn some spiritual tables over because he goes on and tells the second half of that story. Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing, and he called one of his servants and asked, what do these things mean?

And he said to him, your brother's come, and your father's killed the fatted calf because he's received him back safe and sound. But he was angry, and he refused to go in.

His father came out and treated him, but he answered his father, look, these many years I've served you, and I've never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat that I may celebrate with my friends.

But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him.

[10:26] And he said to him, son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead and is alive.

He was lost and is found. You see, the older son didn't like the celebration. And the reason why he didn't like the celebration was he was a compliant child.

He did what he was supposed to do. He didn't rock the boat. He stayed behind. He did his job. He was a good kid. He was the faithful one. And when his brother came and asked for his inheritance, by the way, the older brother got his too, and it was double what the younger brother got.

But he continued to rock on faithfully for his father, just like he was supposed to do. And yet the father calls him out for his wrong attitude about sinners coming to God.

He ought to join in that celebration, but he didn't. He didn't feel like he could. Why? Because the same reason the Pharisees didn't like that part of the story. They didn't like that part of the story.

[11:34] Same reason some Christians don't like that part of the story. The wandering sinner wasn't worthy to have the best thrown at him. Do you know why they felt like that?

What characteristics in us cause us to miss the celebration? To have a hard time with the thief on the cross who Jesus promised would be with him that day once he died?

What's that about? You're talking about a deathbed confession right there. And yet the same salvation that saves us is the same salvation that saved that man that day.

And those folks have been faithful for years. They didn't like it. It don't seem fair. What characteristics cause us to miss a heavenly type celebration over a soul?

I'll tell you what it is. One of them self-righteousness. Older son was proud of his accomplishments. He said, look, these many years I've served you and I've never disobeyed your command.

[12:46] Look at me. And the irony is that the son of the estate owner's job at such an event as this, if there was a gathering, a party, if there was to be such a meeting, the job of the owner of the home, excuse me, of the son of the owner of the home, his job was to hold the door open.

His job was to work the room, to work out any kinks that may come. The son even stood at the door barefooted as if he was a servant and was to hold that door for the guest, physically standing there and by his physical presence there, basically saying, I am here to serve you on behalf of my father and his estate.

And instead of that, this older son stood outside with his arm crossed. If he had anything to say, he should have said it after he served, not pacing around angry, but instead he went out there, got on his cell phone, went to Facebook and said, this ain't right and I ain't gonna do it.

He had too much dignity to bear his dirty laundry, so he put a cryptic message that just his friends would ask about. Private message him and pat him on the back. He refused to serve, hush, Siri, my soul.

He refused to serve, but just wanted to talk about his service. That's what self-righteous does.

Self-righteous is a horrible sin that is seldom seen by the one who's guilty of it.

[14:38] And it'll send you to hell or it'll make you act like you've been there. Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 23, verse 15, he said, they were turning converts into twice as much son of hell as you are yourselves.

That's the words of Jesus. And that's why Jesus speaks of the 99 that need no repentance. Who does not need repentance? Every sinner needs repentance, but some don't think they do.

Everyone's a sinner, but everybody don't think they are. Self-righteousness will cause you to miss the celebration. Tell you what else will, jealousy.

Jealousy will cause you to miss it. It is easy to point out the wrong in somebody else's life. It's easy. It's much easier than facing what's wrong in your life.

It's much easier than dealing with what you're dealing with when the younger one was wrong and he was wrong and he left the house and separated himself and rebelled, estranged himself from the estate.

[15:49] But at the same time, the older one stayed home, but he distanced himself. He refused to go in. His daddy reached out to him, petitioned him.

Let me tell you about the God that saves. The one who grew up in church and then outgrew it, thinks it's old-fashioned and out of touch, that one will find a loving father running out to meet him when he comes back to the cross.

That's the God we serve. God does not want us to waste our time. God does not want us to waste our talent. God does not want us to waste our treasure.

But when we do, thank God, he'll take us back. That's the God we serve. He'll receive us back. The wanderer had come up with what he was gonna say the last time he was feeding those swine. When it clicked, I call it the Holy Spirit clicked. When the Holy Spirit spoke to him about what he needed to do, he needed to go home, he prepared a speech that he would say to his father so that his father would receive him.

[16:53] And I'll tell you that when he got there, his father went running out to him, cut him off from telling his story that he wanted to tell and gave him the best that he had, saying, you don't have to explain yourself, son.

You're mine. I receive you back. Just come. And I will tell you today, friend, if you are wandering away from God and God speaks to your heart and life and draws you to come, you just come. You don't have to have an explanation for that. You just come. I want to get right with the Father today. I want to make it right. You just respond.

Some may have a hard time with what God does in others' lives, but we ought to love it. We ought to love it. God will forgive the faithful pew sitter who thinks he's better than his neighbor.

He'll forgive that too. Jealousy doesn't look as bad as flagrant sin does. But Jesus died for it too.

[18:02] And it'll separate you from the Father. The only hope that any of us have is in Christ. And the ground is level at Calvary.

All of us need it. But you'll miss the joy of the journey. You'll miss the celebration if your life is also filled with selfishness.

Selfishness. We have a good thing going on here. We don't want anybody to mess it up. Well, let me be honest with you. This dad in this story, he was loaded.

He was loaded. He had many servants. He was loaded. A lot of money got wasted when that boy left with a third of the estate. A lot of money got blown.

Even more was given to the older son. He was now the joint owner of the estate. And when he complained, his dad told him, all that is mine is yours.

[19:15] Is that enough? Somebody asked John D. Rockefeller, who was worth in today's dollar about \$25 billion at the turn of the 20th century.

They asked him, they said, John D., how much is enough? He said, a little more. We can get that way about our church.

We can get that way about our role in it. Modern day Pharisees don't want a whole lot of their church changed by those people. Those people can be new Christians.

They can be new people. Or they can be the whole generation that's following them. I don't care to serve in that role. I've done my time.

But I don't think they ought to be serving either. That's selfishness. This older brother wanted a goat to celebrate with his friends.

[20:18] He thought that's what was fun instead of seeing lives changed. And instead, it's just selfishness. Let me tell you what all of us ought to do is find our spot to serve the Lord and let's get after it using our gifts for his honor and glory in his church.

Young and old, find your place. Be faithful. Serve faithfully. Let's get after it. Let's see what God does in us when we give him everything we've got.

But we will miss it if we get selfish. I'll tell you another thing that causes you to miss the celebration and that is aloofness.

Again and again in this story it says he distanced himself. He distanced himself from his brother when he's talking to his daddy. He said, this son of yours. He didn't claim him as his own.

Not only that but he distanced himself from his dad when he said, your property. He squandered your property because he thought himself better. He was too good to open up the doors to a dirty center.

[21:40] Too good to approve of him coming home. Too good to show him up as a welcoming guest. To welcome him as a guest. Modern day Pharisees in the church only get involved when it's good for them.

They look at a bulletin and they hear the announcements and they look at it from this perspective. This bulletin gives me church events to choose from instead of ministry opportunities to be a part of. It's just a different perspective. And the reality is that the father extended the same grace to the older son that he did to the younger son but his nose was so high in the air he didn't even notice it. I want to be clear today. Whether you went out and squandered money in years on riotous living or whether you've been in the church and a part of the church maybe sulked a little bit along the way I'll tell you God's not mad at any of us.

He's not mad at you. He'll accept you as you are but he will call you he'll call it as it is. He'll make it clear.

[ 22 : 56 ] We are responsible for our response when he speaks to us and we're all sinners and the only difference between one and the other is one is lost without Christ and one is saved by the grace of God.

Not one of us has earned it. As you read earlier Ephesians chapter 2 8 through 10 says for by grace you've been saved through faith. This is not of your own doing it's the gift of God not as a reserve of works so that no one can boast.

Listen what's he saved us for? We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for what? For good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Let's walk in it together for the honor and the glory of God. I want you to notice two things.

by posing two questions and I'll close. Is this the whole point of Luke 15?

[ 24 : 09 ] If you look at it in the context of it it actually is. Now don't misunderstand me. Just like one loses an animal and wants to go after that animal and one loses money and wants to go after that money and one loses a loved one and wants that loved one to come back.

Of course all those things are true. But the reality is the beginning of this was in verse 2 and in verse 2 the Pharisees and scribes grumbled saying this man received sinners and eats with them and the gospel writer says so he told them this parable and he followed it with another and he followed it with another.

When I was growing up my neighbor had HBO sandbox there at the house but they had a contract with Mike Tyson in the 80s.

Mike Tyson was quite a boxer in his day unlike anything I've seen and every time he'd fight on HBO me and my dad possibly my brother we'd go up and watch boxing with Uncle Charlie.

He'd pop popcorn in a brown paper grocery bag. Some of you don't even know what that is but anyway and he'd fill it up and we'd have Pepsi Cola and popcorn sitting floor and watch boxing and it was a quick fight usually.

[ 25 : 49 ] Mike Tyson fought every six weeks during those days and normally he'd hit a man one time and he'd fall down first couple of rounds it's pretty amazing to watch but if he ever got challenged he'd begin to work on the body man keeps his hands up high but if you work on his body you bruise him around his ribs he'll drop his hands in protection and when he drops his hands he opens his face and exposes himself for a knockout.

The parable of the sheep was a body blow. The parable of the lost coin was a body blow.

The parable of the lost son was a body blow and when the Pharisees and the scribes began to drop their hands Jesus delivered the blow and that was the prodigal other son or the real prodigal.

second thing is this what happens next after this story? It's interesting if you'll notice the story's not quite complete.

We don't know how it turned out. Did he go in? Did he apologize for his attitude? Did he confront his brother?

[ 27 : 26 ] Did he bust up the party? Did that wayward boy that came home did he stay home? Did he continue to be faithful? Did he stay right?

What's next? I'd love to know but Jesus told it the way he told it on purpose because for us today folks it really don't matter what happened next in their lives.

What matters is what happens next in our lives. Are you coming home?

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 13 says but now in Christ Jesus you who were once excuse me you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Have you been here all the time but yet not really? Possibly crossing your arms and looking down on others and not joining in the celebration?

[ 28 : 46 ] The celebration is where God's on the move. The celebration is where God is at work and we don't dictate how he does that and we can't conjure up how he does that or who he does it in.

We just get in on it and God opens the invitation for us to just get in on it and I don't want to miss it and I don't want you to miss it.

so my question for all of us today is what's next? Christ has exposed the lostness.

Christ has exposed the smugness. Christ has exposed who we really are and he does that through the Holy Spirit of God speaking to our hearts and lives. it's a good thing to know what's wrong with us.

It's another thing to do something about it and so my question today is what's next for you? Maybe as these folks were baptized today you realize there's never been a time in your life when you've surrendered your life to Christ.

[ 30 : 06 ] You've never given him control of your life. Whether you've been a part of a church or whether you've been publicly baptized the reality is when you look at your life you don't see evidence of true salvation.

And you look at your life and realize you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm going to tell you the Father will not only receive you he will run and meet you. I tell folks the hardest step that they possibly will ever make is to walk into the aisle to come down but once you do it it's amazing how the Father will meet you where you are and give you the strength to continue and he'll do that for you today.

Maybe you have done that. You know you're saved you know you're Christian but the reality is you've enjoyed your place so much that you failed to serve the way you need to serve.

What's next? What's next? I'll never ask you to do anything God wouldn't have you to do but I don't ever want you to be satisfied with doing anything less.

I don't know what God's saying to you today but I know you'll never be satisfied until you follow his will and his way for you. With every head bowed and every eye closed dear Lord I pray today for those who need to make private decisions Lord for those who need to make public decisions God I pray today that you will speak to each and every one of us and that God you will give us the strength and the faith and the fortitude to do exactly what you called us to do.

[ 31 : 47 ] Lord there's some that may need salvation today. There's some that may need to publicly profess that through baptism. Some that know that you're leading them to be a part of this church.

God lead them. Show them. Lord there's hearts that need to be made right whether at this altar in their seat with a pastor praying regardless God help us Father to simply follow your will and your way in all of our life and may you get all the glory for it all in Jesus precious name Amen.