**LOST**

**Part 3**

**“The Lost Son”**

**Luke 15: 11 To further illustrate the point, he told them this story: “A man had two sons. 12 When the younger told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die!’ his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.**

**13 “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there wasted all his money on parties and prostitutes. 14 About the time his money was gone a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. 16 The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the swine looked good to him. And no one gave him anything.**

**17 “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired men have food enough and to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man.”’**

**20 “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming, and was filled with loving pity and ran and embraced him and kissed him.**

**21 “His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and you, and am not worthy of being called your son—’**

**22 “But his father said to the slaves, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. And a jeweled ring for his finger; and shoes! 23 And kill the calf we have in the fattening pen. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has returned to life. He was lost and is found.’ So the party began.”**

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**We’ve been going through the 4 things lost in Jesus’ parable in Luke 15, called “the lost and found” chapter.**

**This story of the Prodigal Son is one of Jesus’ most famous parables because we personally identify with it on so many levels.**

**Either we have ourselves left the Father’s house to chase after temptations and enticements.**

**Or we know someone who has strayed from the faith and is right now in “the far country” Jesus spoke of.**

**It might even be one of your own children or a spouse that has drifted.**

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**Now, in this parable the Father is God, and the son represents a child of God—you, me, professing Christians.**

**He was not a stranger, he was the Father’s son.**

**He had grown up in the Father’s house; it was all he’d ever known.**

**Honestly, this parable is like a brilliant gem that glitters and shines from any and all angles—I could spend a month on it.**

**But let me pull out three things that leap off the page, and I feel God wants me to focus on.**

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**The first thing I see is the son was lured out of his Father’s house by the double edged sword of...**

1. **Discontentment and temptation**

**The fact is, the son had it made in the father’s house.**

**He was very well provided for, for his father was wealthy.**

**He had much cattle and goods, and had laid aside a nice inheritance for his boys, which the younger son disrespectfully demanded.**

**He doesn’t say, “Dad, would you please consider letting me have access to my inheritance earlier than you had planned?”**

**Nope. He said, “Give me the portion of goods that falls to me!”**

**Something had been growing in this boy’s heart for some time now—an attitude of rebellion had taken root.**

**We see in his disrespectful approach to the father that he had developed an over the top sense of entitlement—the attitude of “you owe me, so give it to me!”**

**So discontentment, rebellion, and an entitlement attitude festered in his soul.**

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**And joined to his discontentment was enticement to sin.**

**Somehow this young man had heard about a distant place where wine, women, and song could be found in abundance.**

**Maybe some of the Father’s servants had talked about it, and it dropped like bad seed into his mind.**

**Jesus calls that distant place, “the far country.”**

**The more he thought about the “far country” and what it offered, the more discontented he became with the Father’s house, and the devil took advantage of it.**

**He sowed into his mind the lie that he was “missing out” on all the fun in life by being stuck in the Father’s house.**

**He wanted endless partying and fun—a life without rules and restrictions—a place where he could go WHERE he wanted WHEN he wanted.**

**Finally he could stand it no longer, demanded his inheritance, packed his bags, and walked away.**

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**The second thing we find the son doing is engaging in...**

**II. Wild abandon to sin**

**On arriving to the far country, the prodigal son completely surrendered to all his carnal fantasies.**

**He was probably thinking, “I should have done this way before now! This is what I’ve dreamed of! This is the life!”**

**He was quickly surrounded by people more than willing to show him around town.**

**He was amazed at how easy it was to make friends!**

**Jesus says he went on a wild spending spree, and threw away his inheritance on PRODIGAL living.**

**Prodigal means “extravagantly wasteful.”**

**We could say he put the pedal to the metal and sold out to the devil.**

**His actions echo what King Solomon wrote about his own season of backsliding:**

**“I said to myself, ‘I should have fun—I should enjoy everything as much as I can...3 So I decided to fill my body with wine...I tried this foolishness because I wanted to find a way to be happy....10 Anything my eyes saw and wanted, I got for myself’” (Ecclesiastes 2:2-3, 10 ERV).**

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**So for a season the prodigal son had the time of his life.**

**But soon he began to experience...**

**III. Brutal reversals**

**The first reversal was his money ran out.**

**One day he opened his wallet to pay the latest tab to find it empty.**

**The inheritance the Father had lovingly set aside for his future was gone, kaput, wasted, lost.**

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**The second reversal was the truth about his “far country” friends.**

**They’d laughed with him, partied with him, hung with him, showed him all the best bars and clubs.**

**But they always managed to leave the bill with him!**

**The truth smacked him like a bad dream—his so called friends were just using him.**

**Far country friends invariably prove to be fair weather friends who love, not you, but yours.**

**His “friends” had disappeared once the MONEY was gone.**

**He texted them and got no answer.**

**He called them only to find the number was changed.**

**The truth hit him like a punch in the gut...**

**He’d been running with takers and fakers, users and losers, fair weather phonies that vanished when he had nothing left to give them.**

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**As if this wasn’t enough, a third reversal came rushing in!**

**Jesus said, “when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want” (Luke 15:13-14 NKJV).**

**The once appealing far country has now become a place of hunger and need.**

**He became so desperate he took a job with a pig farmer, working out back in the pig pen eating pig food.**

**This is the way it always happens away from the father’s house in the far country.**

**We find ourselves where we never thought we’d be, consuming things we never thought we’d eat, enslaved to things we never thought we’d serve.**

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**The consequences always roll in, and they spell EMPTY.**

**The prodigal son was now empty of friends, empty of money, and empty of options.**

**This is because *Sin always promises what it can’t deliver.***

**Lurking behind every temptation is a false promise...**

**“If you do this you’ll be happy, fulfilled, more content...**

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**Satan went so far as to tell Eve, “If you eat of the forbidden fruit, you will be like God!”**

**The lure of the far country also appeals to your “rights.”**

**It whispers, “You deserve this, others don’t understand your needs, God will understand, you deserve better!”**

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**All these things are exactly what was whispered in the prodigal sons head before he ever left!**

**But sins pleasures only last for a season...**

**The Bible says that Moses chose “to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin” (Heb. 11:25 NIV).**

**Another version says, “He chose not to enjoy the pleasures of sin that last such a short time.” (ERV)**

**The prodigal son had his fun, but now he is beset and battered with brutal reversals.**

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**The story ends on a high note with the:**

**IV. The Father’s Response**

**Jesus said the young man woke up one morning and essentially said, “What am I doing? I had it made in my father’s house, and here I am eating pigs food? I’ve been the devil’s fool!”**

**And he headed home.**

**Jesus said, “And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him” (Lk 15:20).**

**All the boy’s fears of how his father would treat him when he returned vanished.**

**He didn’t yell at him, reject him, turn away from him, or berate him.**

**The truth was, He’d been watching for him every day.**

**His eye was peeled on the same road the boy had left on, longing for the day he’d come back down it again.**

**When he spotted the distant figure, He “ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him.”**

**This is our Heavenly Father when we return home!**

**LET’S PRAY**