

EVANGELISM

Simple Evangelism...



WEST SOUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

SUMMER 2020

...from the Self-Righteous to the Self-Foolish

You know this piece of Bible history. It's all about the Lord Jesus telling another parable. This parable is about two lost sons of a really great Dad. Wait? Two lost sons? Right, two! Of course every one knows about the younger son...the one who asked for his inheritance long before his Dad's demise. "Responsibility" wasn't a word in his repertoire. Instead, he leaned into foolishness with reckless abandon. Yeah, he deserved the title of *Lost Son*. However, his older brother was no less deserving of the title *Lost Son*. Sure, he stayed home, he tended the farm, he did what "he thought Dad wanted." Sure, he mastered the art of responsibility, but he suffered with an exaggerated sense of self-worth...and, apparently, everyone else suffered with him. The younger lost his way by being a fool. The older lost his way by being haughty. The younger wandered lost and far away. The older wandered lost while near at hand.

Now parables are just cool. They're not full-blown allegories, but kinda sorta. Let's call them extended metaphors. They use a story to teach us something about life. Luke 15:11-32, The Parable of the Lost Sons, is most of all a story about the very folks listening to Jesus and God's hopes for them.

1. Who are the primary characters of this meaningful tale?
 - A. The Younger Son: the "tax collectors and sinners"...your average run-of-the-mill, garden variety, everyday, ordinary sinner. He or she foolishly gives too little thought about everything other than self. Luke 15:1
 - B. The Older Son: the "Pharisees and the teachers of the law"...your got-it-together, self-affirming, over-confident, self-deluding sinner. He or she abundantly thinks about his or her self-righteousness. Luke 15:2
 - C. The Father: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...the One behind the story, the One telling the story, the heavenly creator who is both compassionate and gracious. Luke 15:20,31,32



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2. What was the deal with the younger son?
 - A. He was rash and immature. vss. 11-13
 - B. He eventually became desperate. vss. 14-16
 - C. He finally came to his senses. vss. 17-20a
 - D. He realized it wasn't his Father's riches he needed, but his Father. vss.20b-24

3. What was the deal with the older son?
 - A. He was more concerned about himself than others. vss. 25-28a
 - B. He was deluded about his own righteousness. vss. 28b-30

4. And what was the deal with the Father?
 - A. He was, is, and ever shall be filled with compassion. vs. 20-24
 - B. He was, is, and ever shall be filled with grace. vss. 31,32

In the end, this is a tale about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and his love, compassion, mercy and grace for all of us. Really, how more different could these brothers have been? One was the poster-child for immaturity, care-free, selfish, entitled indulgence. He tripped along oblivious to the concerns of others...until it was nearly too late. The other was the poster-child of the smug, I've-got-all-the-answers, over-worked, over-worried, self-righteoused minion of his own self-importance. That's the complete continuum! Every man, woman, and child...until we come home...

...we know the younger, the self-foolish, came home

...we're not told why Jesus didn't tell us the outcome of the self-righteous son.

Hmmm...

