

The Structure of the Lost Son Parable
(Luke 15:11-32)

Prodigal means to be extravagantly wasteful. This parable is most often referred to as the "Prodigal Son because the young son was miserably extravagant with his inheritance and his life. But the structure of the story suggests that a better title would be, "The prodigal Father," because the very center of the parable is the embrace of the dad who lavishes his love and wealth on his undeserving son. Likewise, the center of our faith is the loving embrace of our heavenly Father who is extravagantly wasteful in showering on us sinners His amazing love and grace. The center of the New Testament and of our lives is also this profound grace.

- A** Younger son and father talk about the inheritance. (15:12)
- B** Younger son in a field (longing for what was thrown to swine). (15:14-17a)
- C** Younger son has nothing. (15:17b)
- D** Younger son practices speech. (15:18-19)
- X** **THE FATHER'S EMBRACE OF YOUNGER SON** (15:20)
- D'** Younger son gives abbreviated speech. (15:21)
- C'** Younger son has everything. (15:22-23)
- B'** Older son in a field (longing for that thrown to swine). (15:25-30)
- A'** Older son and father talk about the inheritance. (15:31-32)

The Meaning of the Parable:

1. performance and good works are not part of the criterion for inclusion in God's family.
2. Jesus main objective was to "Seek and Save" lost sinners. (Luke 19:10) (this parable is the last of three in Luke 15 dealing with lost things found)
3. God welcomes sinners (represented by young son) unconditionally into his family even though they have not kept Old Testament laws and rituals and were considered unclean and unacceptable (swine) by the Jews.
4. God embraces unworthy and repentant sinners and invites them into his family. (The center of the story is this embrace of a sinner)

Other Examples of Jesus' Embrace of the Unworthy and Unclean.

- ✦ Zacchaeus, the cheating tax collector. (Luke 19:1-9)
- ✦ The tax collector in Jesus' parable. (Luke 18:9-14)
- ✦ The sinful woman at the well. (John 4:1-26)
- ✦ The adulterous woman. (John 8:3-11)
- ✦ The foreign woman from Tyre. (Mark 7:24-30)
- ✦ The leper and the ten. (Luke 5:12-16, Luke 17:11-19)
- ✦ The Roman military leader. (Luke 7:1-10)
- ✦ Tax collectors and "sinners." (Luke 15:1-2)
- ✦ Samaritans. (John 4:39-42)
- ✦ Jesus anointed by ~~sinful~~ woman. (Luke 7:36-39)

**The
Gospels**

**THE ABCs OF THE
GOSPEL STORY**

**A - Z
Review**

- A** Annunciation
- B** Birth
- C** Coronation
- D** Desert Temptations
- E** Evening Encounter
- F** Full-Time Followers
- G** Galilean Ministry
- H** Healings
- I** I Am
- J** Jewish Opposition
- K** Kingdom Teachings (parables)
- L** Lost Son
- M** Mountain Messages
- N** Nain Miracle
- O** Open Mouths Filled
- P** Peter's Confession
- Q** Questions of Divinity
- R** Raising of Lazarus
- S** Sunday of Palms
- T** Temple Cleansing
- U** Unhappy Night (Maundy Thursday)
- V** Vanishing Acts (Garden of Gethsemane)
- W** Whips and Witnesses (trial)
- X** EXecution
- Y** Yells at the Cross
- Z** Zenith of ~~OC~~ Life - The World's Hope