

Not
School's out!

Summer lessons from the parables

Main Point

It's not about doing things right, or being right, it's about having the right relationship



Recap

- Father has two sons
- Younger took inheritance early and ran off
- Completely squandered the money
- Realizes how bad of situation he's in
- Comes home and is welcomed by his father



“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

Luke 15: 25-26 NIV



‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’
“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

Luke 15: 27-28 NIV

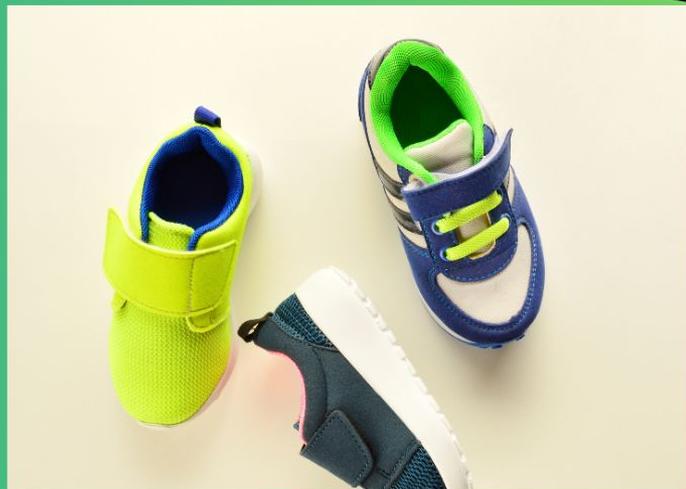


The Older Brother's Story

- Older brother stayed home
- Finds out what's going on at the party
- He is furious
- Father begs him to come in



Please put your shoes on...



But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

Luke 15: 29-30 NIV



The Brother's Wrong View

- Slave/Master or Employee/Employer
- He's taken away his own sonship
- Doesn't love his father, just for being his father



"THE GARDENER WAS GIVING ME THE CARROT, BUT YOU WERE GIVING YOURSELF THE HORSE"



The Brother's Wrong View

- Gave and obeyed so he could get
- Disassociates from his brother
- He thinks he is right
- *“So focused on the bad, he’s blind to the beauty”* - NT Wright



TOO FOCUSED, TOO CONSUMED, TOO BLIND....



Our Wrong View Of Relationship

- Wrong motives
 - ◆ Happens with recognition
 - ◆ Our relationship with God becomes transactional not transformational
 - ◆ This takes our attitudes off course



Rewards, Rewards, Rewards!!!



Our Wrong View Of Relationship

- Jealousy and entitlement
 - ◆ Hard to see and admit
 - ◆ We lose sight of our image as children of God and instead see or image as children of comparison



Comparison

"Live your best life"!



What Happens

- Our view of home gets distorted
- It becomes unwelcoming to younger brothers
- *“If our churches aren’t appealing to our younger brothers they must be more full of elder brothers than we think”* –Tim Keller “The Prodigal God”



What Happens

- We lose joy
 - ◆ Nothing fills us up in a good way
- We grow fear
 - ◆ What God will do based on our performance



Getting Cut From the Team???



“My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Luke 15: 31-32 NIV

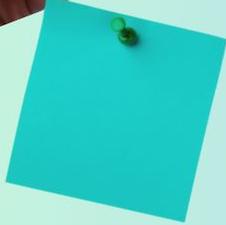


God's View

- We are still God's children
- Everything He has is ours
- We didn't lose anything
- We just need that reminder



REMINDERS



Wrap Up

- Repent of jealousy, entitlement and anger
- Repent of why we did things right
- Praise God for the relationship we have with Him
- Have a transformational and right relationship with God



Audio file

[Older Son Audio Only.mp3](#)

Transcript

In my family, I I said my dad. I'm like my dad. Pretty quiet keeps to himself. We also were both music people, tennis players back in our day, so I would probably say my dad. But I'm also a blend of all of it. I also just want to be an individual, as the youngest. We don't want to be like anybody generally. So we want to be ourselves. Now, why am I asking you that? Very apparently somewhat difficult and crazy question because we are in week. Two of our series miniseries on the parable of the Prodigal Son, and if you were with us last week, we know we have three main characters. We have the father and older son and a younger son, and each week we will look at these. One of these characters and see how we might relate to them. Now, if you were with us last week, we did the younger son. So maybe you thought about it all. How you're like him kind of ran away with everything. And then. Came back home. In essence, maybe going away from God and coming back. Today, we're going to talk about the older son, who has an incredibly different story, right, and a very different relationship to his father. And I think part of the issue with him. Is that he doesn't have a good view of his relationship with his father, and that's really where this all kind of stems from and his issues in this story. He's a tougher 1 to talk about because I think many times if we think about it, we can relate really well to him. But he's not a great story, doesn't feel good to relate to him. But I think if we're being honest, many of us can. I know I can so. Here's what I want us to think about. With this older son in context of like the relationship with his father. It's not about doing things right or being right. It's about having the right relationship. It's not about just doing things right or being right. Many of us want to be right and even do things right, but it's about having the right relationship and we'll do this in the context of our relationship with God. So before we dive into the older son story, let's do a quick recap. If you are unfamiliar with the parable. How we got here we have a father with two sons. The younger of which asked for his inheritance early. Big, Big deal back in this day, a huge sign of disrespect, shameful to his family, to say I want my money and my inheritance early. He took it, ran off to a completely different country, squandered it, probably made it rain all over, wherever he went. Money's gone. So he's got no money then a famine. It's so he's got no money and no food ends up working in a field where he's feeding pigs. This is humiliating and terrible. Finally comes to his senses and says, WOW, things are really. I'm going to go back to my father. His plan is to 1st off, repent and apologize for what he did and then offer to basically work as a servant for the father. He comes home, the father runs out to greet him and welcomes him home as a son, not as a servant but as a son. So where we are in the story is the brother. The older brother knows that the younger brother left, but he doesn't yet know that he's home. So we're gonna pick it up there. We'll be in Luke chapter 15. 18 We're going to start with verses 25 through 28. It'll be up here behind me, right there. It's also bookmarked in some of those Bibles on your tables. If you would like to follow. So Luke 15:25 through 28. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field when he came near the house. He heard music and dancing, so he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. Your brother has come, he replied. And your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back, safe and sound. Her older brother became angry and refused to go in, so his father went out and pleaded with him. We're going to stop there. Alright, so here's what we got going. Older son, older brother. I'll probably

use those both those terms, same guy. He is out working in the field. He stayed alright. Younger brother runs off, older brother stays, he works, he's dutiful, he's obedient and he works right. This seems admirable. He was the good boy that stayed home. He did it right. This is a. Good thing, right? Well, here's music and sees dancing going on back up at the house area. This would have been a big enough celebration that the father would have brought in performers, entertainers. These weren't like the banquet guests out, like partying and dancing. They entertainment was brought in. This is a huge deal. So he's like, what is going on? So he asked the servant servant tells him. Well, there's. This big party. And he tells him why. And that's what gets the older brother, the older brothers. Gotta be thinking. My younger brother was shameful. He was disrespectful, he ran off, and now he came home and he's getting this party. He is furious. He's mad. He won't go into the party, so he forces his father to come out. This is also a massive sign of disrespect. His father is in there hosting a party and the brother is making him leave his guests. To come out and deal with. OK, so the father. Begs him to come inside. Just beg. Come in and talk to. Me about this. The father is to beg him, even though. He shouldn't even have to. Those of us with kids know that sometimes we have to beg our children to do things, whether we should or shouldn't, right? Sometimes we beg our kids to clean up or brush their teeth. Or pick up their toy, go to bed fairly. Normal. Here's the one that. To me though, sometimes I have to beg my kids to do things like put their shoes on when we're going to go somewhere that's really fun like they want. To go to the. Zoo or the park, or or wherever we're going. And we still kind of like being like, let's go get your shoes on. Let's go. And I think a lot of it is because they're just so focused. I know, at least with my son Jeremiah, he's just so focused on whatever else he's doing. That he's not really listening to what's happening. The father in this story has to plead with the older son because the older son is just so upset he's only focused. On his anger and on what's going on, why this party is happening. He's upset and it's really set off because of how he views his relationship with his father. Let's read what that's about. It's gonna be Luke 15. The next two verses, 29 and 30. But he answered his father. So the older son answers. His father? Look. All of these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. That you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when the son of yours who squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fat and calf for him will stop there. He starts out by saying I've been slaving for you and here's where he already gets this relationship wrong. He takes it as, like a slave master for us, maybe an employee employer relationship with his father. That's the view he's kind of taking with this. His heart isn't with his father anymore. He's left in his own way. He's almost taken away his own sonship and seen it as this employee employer. What am I going to get? He doesn't love his father anymore for just being his father. Right. He loves his father. For what his father has, that he is going to inherit anything he does or he gives for his father to his father, for his father is for his own gain.

OK.

There's a really cool little kind of anecdote or story about this in this book. It's called the prodigal God by Tim Keller. Tim Keller is a pastor. Author passed away just a couple of months ago. We wrote this book and it's fantastic and he's got this little story about this. I'm going to read it here. So Once Upon a time there was a gardener who grew an enormous carrot. So he took it to his king and said, my Lord, this is the greatest carrot I've ever grown or will grow. Therefore I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you. The king was touched, discerned the man's heart. So he turned as he turned to go. The king said. Wait, you're clearly. A good steward of the earth. I own a plot of land right next to yours. I want to give it to you freely as a gift so you can garden it all. The gardener was amazed and

delighted and went home rejoicing. But there was a nobleman at the King's court who overheard all this and said my if that is what you. Get for a carrot. What if you give the king something better so the next day the nobleman came before the king, he was leading a handsome black stallion. He bowed low and said, my Lord, I breed horses and this is the greatest horse I've ever bred or ever will. Therefore I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you. But the king discerned. His heart and said thank you took the horse and merely dismissed him. The noble was perplexed. So the king said, let me explain. The gardener was giving me the carrot you were giving yourself the horse. It's a giving so that you get that's kind of what the older brother was doing. He worked. He did his thing, but only so that he could get better. So it makes me more mad. Because he's been doing this and now he rips into his father, he says you never gave me anything to celebrate with my own friends. He's getting entitled. He's like you're gonna give this. The younger son, what did I? And he says that son of yours came back, he doesn't even refer to his own brother. Disassociating from his brother, he's like, no, this is your son, because what his brother did was he was ungrateful. What he did was unfathomable. It was unforgivable. And his father killed a fattened calf for him. The fatten cap. This is a big deal. This is like the prized possession. This could have gone to the older brother as part of his inheritance. He's like you took one of the best things we have and you gave it to him. He is blinding mad. And T Wright says he's so. Focused on the bed that he's blind to the beauty he doesn't see the beauty, the good thing that his father's doing. He's uncle, able to see it. He's just blind. He's so focused on something else. I was in a A staff meeting years ago with some coworkers and a boss, and during this meeting the boss was going to kind of change the role of of somebody in our department and our team. And so he tells her what the change is going to be. And she's clearly not prepared for this. And she's clearly taken back throwing off and doesn't like it. So the meeting goes on. This happens meeting ends and some people leave. Some people are milling. About the boss. Is like, wow, what a great meeting. And we're all like. The few of us left like no, like, this was awful. This was hard. Like, she clearly didn't know this was happening. He was so focused on getting his agenda across and his vision and doing this thing, he didn't see what was actually happening in the room. He was so focused. The son in our story, his older son, is so focused on being angry and being mad he missed what his father is actually doing. He can't see it. We can have similar tendencies to this older son if we're not careful, we can view our relationship with God in the wrong way. If we're not careful. So let's look at that. We may not even realize it how we do it. So we want to do is look at some ways maybe this starts and some attitudes we get when we start to maybe just. Take that view in a direction we shouldn't, so let's look at this for a second. The first one, it starts with motives. And I think this is the first. Piece we do. So the older son works, he works hard, he does his thing, but it's all to get and this can happen with us. I think it happens a lot with recognition. Think about if we were go to volunteer somewhere at a with kids or with the needy or a food pantry or anything like that. That in itself is a good thing. But if we do it just to take the picture and post it or show it off and get the likes of the recognition, our motives are off. I have to watch that every Sunday. I get up here and my up here just to make you laugh or get a pat on the back. Or am I doing what God wants me to do and saying the things God wants me to say we have? To be careful of our motives. Because what we can do is we can slip into this like I'm obeying God as like a rewards based system. Right, we get rewards. All the time. Right credit cards give us rewards, right? We get credit card rewards if we spend, we get different things back. We might get cheaper insurance on our car if we have a clean accident record. One of the cool ones. Kyle, you can put up this slide. We we like glass, nickel pizza and I get dough rewards which are super cool, right? So you spend money, glass, nickel and all of a sudden, hey, you get free cheesy bread next time you order or something like that. These are all transactional things. We're doing

something to get something. And we can take this mode with God. And what happens when we do this? Our relationship with God becomes a transactional 1, not a transformational 1. The transactional. I'll do this so that you give to me versus transformational. I'll do this because of what you've done for me and I want our relationship to grow. Same thing with obedience. Right. We don't obey. So that God will love us. We obey because God loves us. So when we get these motives kind of backwards are turned around, our relationship can turn into a transaction, and then it takes our attitudes off course. And two attitudes that I think showed up for the older brother and can easily show up for us. Our jealousy and entitlement. And these are hard ones to admit. We don't like to admit we're jealous. We don't want to say we're entitled, and I get it. And many time. Times we may not even notice them when they kick in or we may not even see them as a problem, but we. Can start to think I want what they have. Wait a? God bless them with that. Well, I want that I'm mad about it or we get annoyed or angry and it becomes wait. I did better than they did. I deserve that or better. So we're entitled. And we start to lose sight of our image as children of God and instead see our image as children of comparison and comparison is really hard to deal with because it's every. Right, we compare ourselves without realizing it to people all over the place. Family members we talked about who were like, maybe you compared yourself to that family member you're like or friends or neighbors or anybody else outside, maybe even to influencers, right, social media, the influencers. They're out there promoting a product or being somewhere awesome and just saying, hey, come on out. Just just live your best life, be like this. Right? So we compare ourselves and say, oh, I want that look like this dudes out taking a video over the ocean, that she's sitting all comfortable. I want that we compare to that and we start looking at others. Instead of looking at God, we compare ourselves to others. When we do that, it just it. Doesn't measure up. Because we'll always just want more and we get frustrated and angry that we're not that. So we can push that away. Because we think. Maybe God's not the one that gives us that best life that creeps in. And this isn't a place we want to be, but it absolutely happens. If we're being honest. So we have to do is kind of admit that sometimes this creeps in and I want to look at. Kind of another result of when we get to the point where our motives are maybe a little bit skewed and we get jealous, we get angry. Now what? We have this view of home with God, right? So being with God that becomes distorted. It's no longer a place defined by love and grace and forgiveness, which is what. Really is. Now it becomes a place to find by jealousy and entitlement and home becomes unwelcoming. We don't want the people that we see that are screwing up. Wait you forgive? Those people? No, no, no. I would never do that. I'd never be that bad. They're terrible. I won't forgive that. I can't forget I would never do that. Right? Do you ever notice? Or maybe this is just a me thing? That it's easier to forgive people that struggle or screw up in the same? Way you do right? Because, like oh, I can relate to that. But it's really hard sometimes to forgive people that might mess up in a way you don't. But either way it becomes unwelcoming. The younger brothers that we've seen, the ones that have walked away or strayed now they don't feel welcome coming back to God, coming in with us. And we know this isn't right, but they feel looked down upon and this is not what Jesus wants. In the same book, the Prodigal God. Tim Keller says if our churches aren't appealing to our younger brothers. They must be more full of the elder brothers than we think. We want the younger brothers around. We want people that have struggled and that know they need forgiveness and need love and. Grace to come. Back we want that, but it's hard to do when we get into that older brother mode. It's just hard. And when we're in that older brother. Mode we can lose the. There's no joy, nothing that fills us up in a good way. No smiles, no laughter, no hope through the pain that we experience. It's not there. We start to lose joy and then in turn, we grow fear, saying well, man, I better. I better perform well, I better do well. So that God doesn't get mad. I

better be. Better than those other Christians so that God favors me more. So it's all. Fear of what God's gonna do based on our performance. It's like we're we're, in essence, worried. We're gonna, like, get cut from team God if we're not good enough. I played basketball my freshman year of high school. I know I'm a short guy. I played basketball one year, but we we had tryouts. We had a lot of guys go out freshman year and then we're going to be cuts. So every day at that first week of tryouts, everybody, every pass you make, every drill you run, you're like, OK, am I going to do enough for these coaches to keep me on the team? Am I going to show? Up on the cut sheet when it's posted outside the locker room. So we get so concerned by that our nerves, our anxiety, everything feels and we just want to be. Better than everybody else. This can happen with God when we focus so much on doing things that are enough for him, because we think he'll just let us go. So we get so dialed in on our performance. So what the older brother was doing, but it's just not God's view of our relationship. It's not a performance based one. He doesn't want that. But we have to lookout for. All those attitudes for the jealousy for the entitlement, for anger, for losing our joy. And if we're seeing those in our lives, we're honestly taking a step back and seeing those. It's OK because we've all been there. I think I guess I can't speak for all of you, but I know I've been there. Many times. So we look at that and say, OK, am I missing? My relationship with God is it not where it should be, or am I looking at it in the wrong way one? Thing we can do is remember. How God views our relationship. Let's finish up the parable and we'll see what the father says here. This is Luke, 15:31 and 32. My son, the father said. You are always with me. Everything I have is yours, but we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and his found. The father starts by saying my son. My child, it's this gentle. Tender reminder that you're still his child. He's like all the time you want with me. Is yours. Everything I have is still yours. He's like saying there's no shortage of the fat and calf with God, that's there. Everything we have there is still love and grace and forgiveness. With God, we don't have to be jealous or entitled or angry. And we'll get to more of the heart of the father next week when we wrap up. The series with him. But the father gives a reminder of who he is, and I think that's what we need sometimes. Just that reminder of who God is and that that relationship we have, we live in a world where we can set reminders for everything, OK. Many of you probably use alarms and reminders. You can put them on phones and devices to remind you to pick up the kids, take your medications, take dinner out of the oven, do anything right. There was actually, I read a story. Where somebody had a friend that was going to house. It so he set a reminder on Alexa to every hour. Say I'm watching you so that his friend that was in the house would just hear that every hour. Sounds cruel, but he set a reminder even for that to play a joke on somebody. He sets a reminder, but we can remind ourselves of anything. Right. We need to remind ourselves of our relationship with God. Put an alarm on your phone or some sort of device to remind you. Put a sticky note on your mirror or your computer monitor or something, but remind yourself of that right relationship with God. That right view of your relationship. And if you're thinking about it and saying right now it's not where it should be, right? This is not quite where it is. It can always be work done. Just look here at the older brother in the painting. If you can see it here. He's right over here. Is who they're depicting him as. He's got his head down, his hands folded. And it appears he came in and is back with his family now. The parable itself doesn't say what the older brother actually does, but based on the heart of his father. And how we're always welcomed back, I think this is the way it goes. He comes back in with his family, he understands that relationship and getting back to that right relation. So I want to encourage you to do is if you are feeling those attitudes of any sort of jealousy or entitlement or anger or you're missing that joy, talk to God about it. They'll repent of any of the anger, the jealousy, and if it's motives, repent of why we did things right, not of

doing the right thing, but of why to just get recognition or anything like that, if that's where you are. If your relationship with God, you're like, no, it's actually really good. And I have the right view. Great praise God for that. Talk to him about it and say thank you. And keep it growing with him. Keep it there. But in either case, whether it's not where it should be or it is, let's focus on having the right relationship, the transformational relationship and again just that right relationship with God. Our father. Let's pray God to thank you for this morning. Got to thank you for this parable. Again, you got even though that the the story of the older brother can be a tough. One and maybe some. Attitudes or some actions? We don't want to relate to, but many of us can. But God, I thank you through all that, that we're still welcomed back that as always we have grace and forgiveness and love from you that we don't need to be jealous or angry or entitled when it comes to other people or comparing ourselves to them. God, that we just have to remember that we're just your children and we don't lose out on anything with you. And that we're always loved. We always have grace. We always have forgiveness. So again, God, I thank you for the story. And for that love. That you share in your name, Amen.