

Sermon Title: Seeking What Is Lost

Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

March 30, 2025

Today, we're looking at one of Jesus' most powerful stories: the parable of the Prodigal Son. But really, it's not just about one son—it's about two very different sons and one incredibly loving father. And it's about us, too.

Jesus tells this story because the religious leaders were upset with him. Why? Because he spent time with people they considered “unworthy”—tax collectors, outcasts, sinners. People the world pushed aside. The religious leaders thought they were better than these people. They knew the Scriptures. They prayed. They followed the rules. But they missed the most important thing: love.

And so, Jesus told them a story.

A young son demands his inheritance early, leaves home, and wastes everything. Broke and starving, he decides to go back—not expecting to be welcomed, just hoping to survive. But the father sees him from a distance, runs to him, throws his arms around him, and throws a feast. That's how God loves us. No matter how far we've gone, he runs toward us with open arms.

But the story doesn't end there.

The older brother, the one who stayed, is furious. He says, “I've done everything right! I never disobeyed! Why are you celebrating him?” He's angry because he sees himself as better than his brother. He doesn't understand grace. He doesn't see his father's heart.

Jesus is showing us something important. Whether we're the younger son, who's made obvious mistakes... or the older son, who hides pride behind good behavior... we are all in need of

grace. The father goes out to both sons. He pleads with both of them. He loves both deeply. And he wants both to come inside—to be part of the celebration.

We don't know how the older son responds. Jesus leaves that part open. Maybe that's because he wants *us* to answer it. Will we harden our hearts? Or will we soften them and accept God's love?

In this story, God is the father who seeks the lost, who restores the broken, and who welcomes us home—not because we've earned it but because he loves us.

That same love surrounds Maizy today as she receives the sacrament of baptism. She doesn't fully understand it yet, but God's love already reaches for her through her family, through this church, and grace.

So, where do you see yourself in this story? Have you run far from God, thinking you're too broken? Or have you stood nearby, thinking you don't need grace? Either way, the father is looking for you. He's running toward you.

Let us turn from pride, from self-righteousness, and from trying to earn what can only be received freely. Let this story change your heart.

Jesus is calling—gently, lovingly—inviting you home.

Amen.