

“The Older Brother”

Luke 15:25-32 Sunday AM, March 29, 2026

Prelude: Scripture: Luke 15:11-32 (NASB95) And He said, “A man had two sons. 12 “The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. 13 “And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 “Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 “So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 “And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. 17 “But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 ‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.’” 20 “So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 “And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 “But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they began to celebrate. 25 “Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 “And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 “And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.’ 28 “But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 “But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 “But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”

Jesus’ spoke, and the tax collectors and “sinners” were among those who listened to Jesus. 2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” What SHOULD we do with the sinners? For whom do you care? Who has value? To those who understood the value of a sheep, He asked, to what extent would you go for ONE sheep? To those who understood the value of a coin, he asked, to what extent would you go to find one coin? Or how far will you go for a son? What if he is selfish, wasteful—dishonoring you not only by his thoughtless living but by demanding more to live the way he wants? Is there anything in your heart that responds when this son recognizes his miserable position and attitude and in desperation, turns back toward you as the only one who might care again? You heard the account. This father responded to his repentant son before he even knew he was fully repentant. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. The son immediately wants to set things right by admitting his wrong, but the Father is already in motion showering honor on one who did not deserve it. Why? 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ There is plenty of time to talk about sin and what restoration looks like, but just watch—there is One who sees more and showers mercy. Jesus cared for those who would listen to Him. You who know the value of a sheep, a coin, a lost son, when you find them, how do you respond? The Father cares so much for undeserving sinners that He responds in kind with great joy! 10 “In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Sing the Father’s Love

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Magnificent, Marvelous, Matchless Love**

Today’s passage shows there is more to the story. There is another brother who didn’t see things the same way. “But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. No way. I can’t be part of something so unjust. I’ve worked, I’ve obeyed, and I have received NO REWARD like you give the undeserving. Feel the sting and think where you fit—older brother, younger brother. When you find where you fit, do you have room for the Father’s perspective? What do you deserve from the Father? Further, who cares for him, thinks about the injustice, the dishonor, the cost to love. Have you contemplated the gospel this week—how God could be just AND still justify you? Contemplate the mercies of God.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): A Debtor to Mercy Alone *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Then Will the Very Rocks Cry Out**

Scripture: Luke 19:28-44 (NASB95) After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat, untie it and bring it here. 31 “If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of it.’” 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” 34 They said, “The Lord has need of it.” 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: “BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” 40 But Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!” 41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 “For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

Offering: *Doxology:

Today is Palm Sunday, and it fits with our Luke 15 passage. Opposition, grumbling—He accepts and eats with sinners—Palm Sunday—STOP their singing, their praise. And in the face of deadly opposition, Jesus continues the eternal plan of redemption—doing ALL necessary to redeem undeserving ones. This great redemption was not done in secret but prophesied to those who would listen and today we celebrate those who acknowledged this prophecy from Zechariah fulfilled as they watched Jesus enter the city. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. The choir sang it, now don’t let the rocks cry out—Glorify God by recounting the trustworthiness of God’s promises to deliver undeserving ones like us.

***Hymn #174: Hosanna, Loud Hosanna**

32 “But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.”

You may be seated. What does the father do with the elder brother’s concerns? He honors his elder son with recognition of his faithfulness and promises material reward. “Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But then he calls him to rejoice in the miracle of another soul having his eyes opened and coming back where he belonged. Where is the brokenness, the betrayal, the injustice, the selfishness, the foolishness? Who comes to mind? Pray not merely for reconciliation, but for God’s heart for the undeserving. Remember Jesus as He approached Jerusalem? He saw the city and wept over it, longing for them to see and turn. The heart that weeps for the wrong ones is the heart that can and will rejoice when they move at all, not merely toward you, but toward God. May this hymn be your prayer for yourself and for them. Praise God that the Father has a place for both brothers.

***Hymn #341: Lord, I’m Coming Home**

Message: “The Older Brother” Luke 15:25-32 *Hymn #338: At Calvary *Prayer