



March 31, 2019 Lk. 15: 1-3, 11-32 & Joshua 5: 9-12

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Lost and found. The theme of today's reading. Jesus presents us with an image of God that refuses to let anyone or anything go without endless offers of restoration. When we too "come to our senses" we realize that life in one long progression of offers of unconditional love. We must reject all those images of God that are smaller than this one if we are to accept Jesus' understanding of God. Like the people in this parable, he wants everyone to "rejoice with me" that the one who thought they were lost, were never truly lost to God, and only lost in their too small understanding of God.

LK 15:1-32

1. The **tax collectors** and the **sinners** were all gathering around Jesus to hear him, 2. at which the **Pharisees** and the **scribes** murmured, "This man

welcomes **sinners** and eats with them." 3 Then he addressed this parable to them:

"11 A man had two **sons**. [12] The **younger** of them said to his **father**, '**Father**, give me the **share** of the **estate** that is coming to me.' So the **father** divided up the **property**. 13 Some days later this **younger son** collected all his **belongings** and went off to a **distant land**, where he **squandered** his money on **dissolute** living. 14 After he had **spent** everything a great **famine** broke out in that country and he was in **dire** need. 15 So he **attached** himself to one of the **propertied class** of the place, who sent him to his farm to take care of the **pigs**. 16 He **longed** to fill his belly with the husks that were **fodder** for the pigs, but no one made a move to give him anything. 17 Coming to his **senses** at last, he said: 'How many **hired hands** at my **father's** place have more than enough to eat, while here I am **starving**! 18 I will **break away** and **return** to my **father**, and say to him, "**Father**, I have **sinned** against God and against you; 19 I no longer **deserve** to be called your **son**. Treat me like one of your **hired hands**.'" 20 With that he set off for his **father's** house. While he was still a long way off, his **father** caught **sight** of him and was **deeply moved**. He ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. 21 The **son** said to him, '**Father**, I have **sinned** against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your **son**.' 22 The **father** said to his **servants**: 'Quick! Bring out the finest **robe** and put it on him; put a **ring** on his finger and **shoes** on his feet. 23 Take the **fatted calf** and kill it. Let us eat and **celebrate** 24 because this **son** of mine was **dead** and has come back to **life**. He was **lost** and is **found**.' Then the **celebrations** began.

25 "Meanwhile the **elder son** was out on the land. As he neared the house on his way home, he heard the sound of music and dancing. 26 He called one of the **servants** and asked him the reason for the dancing and the music. 27 The **servant** answered, "Your **brother** is home, and your **father** has killed the **fatted calf** because he has him back in good health.' 28 The **son** grew angry at this and would not go in; but his **father** came out and began to **plead** with him. 29 "He said in reply to his **father**: 'For years now I have **slaved** for you. I never **disobeyed** one of your **orders**, yet you never gave me so much as a **kid goat** to **celebrate** with my friends. 30 Then, when this **son** of **yours** returns after having gone through **your property** with loose women, you kill the **fatted calf** for him.' 31 "'My **son**,' replied the **father**, 'you are with me always, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to **celebrate** and rejoice! This **brother** of yours was **dead**, and has come back to **life**. He was **lost**, and is **found**.'"

DISCUSSION QUESTION: This parable offers each of us an invitation. Mine says, can you come in and dance? What does yours?

PRAYER: Lord, when I am confronted by this parable I hope that I see in the mirror the child that came to themselves and stumbled home into your welcoming arms. But I must confess, more often than not, if I am truthful, I see the resentful one who grumbles about your unconditional love for the sinner. Help me as I find the strength to come in to the party and dance. Amen.