

The prod·i·gal God

You think you know the story...

Message Five: The True Elder Brother

Pastor Mike Chapman

In the first of the three parables Jesus told, there is a lost sheep and the shepherd goes out to seek for it and finds it. In the second, there is a lost coin, and the woman diligently looks for it until it is found. In the third parable, a son leaves the family and it appears no one goes to seek to bring him home. So what's the deal?

WHY NO ONE WENT AFTER THE YOUNGER SON

Since the first two stories someone goes to seek the lost object, the listeners fully expect the third parable would be similar.

Surely someone will set out to search for the lost brother and bring him home.

Jesus is leading his listeners to ask, **Why isn't someone seeking for the son who is lost?**

In the First Century, the answer would have been **the elder brother should be looking for him.**

The story is designed to create a yearning.

THE FATHER'S FORGIVENESS

The forgiveness of the Father is **assertive**.

He does not make his son come and ask for forgiveness.

He doesn't care what he is covered in or how he smells.

The forgiveness of the Father is **sacrificial**.

He takes the eyes of the villagers off his son and turns the attention to himself.

The Father says "no" to his son's plan for reconciliation.

Instead of **inflicting** payment for his son's sins, he **absorbs** the debt.

THERE IS A TRUE ELDER BROTHER

His listeners were pondering in their hearts, "Where is the elder brother?"

Jesus wanted them to know that he was standing right in front of them.

Luke 19:10, *The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them.* (NCV)

Jesus left the **porch** of heaven and came to meet us.

He emptied himself of **divine glory**.

Philippians 2:6-8, When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human...It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he

lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death. (Msg)

He **absorbed** our debt and pain.

Isaiah 53:6, We all have wandered away like sheep; each of us has gone his own way. But the LORD has put on him the punishment for all the evil we have done. (NCV)

He did it all with great **joy**.

Hebrews 12:2, *He suffered death on the cross. But he accepted the shame as if it were nothing because of the joy that God put before him. (NCV)*

We get to wear the Father's robe, because Jesus was stripped naked on the cross. We get the Father's feast, because Jesus took the cup of wrath. We live, because Jesus gave his life.