

**The Story of the Lost Sons***Luke 15:1-32*

**Introduction:** In Luke 15 Jesus tells three stories about lost things. There is the lost sheep (3-7). There is the lost coin (8-10). And finally, there is the lost son (or lost sons as Steve P. stated it on Sunday). In each of these stories, God's heart is revealed, but certainly it is most clearly revealed in the story of the prodigal son. May we hear God's heart for us in this parable told by the master story teller.

**Opening Discussion:** When is a time you felt lost?

**Read Luke 15:1-2; 11-24**

1. What is the context of the story of the prodigal son (v. 1-2)? Why did Jesus tell it?
2. How would you describe the younger son?

Steve P. said:

This half of the parable, about the younger son, is the half that we know well—it captures our imagination and heart as we listen to the way the Father responds to his son. There is something heart wrenching about the younger son coming to the conclusion that while he is no longer worthy to be a son, but maybe, just maybe his father would take him back as a servant; and then when the Father runs out and according to the Hindi translation, his heart melts with compassion, he grabs his son by the neck, pulls him in and keeps on kissing him again and again. And for many of us, it brings hope to believe that God might actually treat us in the same manner.

3. What is it about this half of the parable that grabs our hearts?
4. What is revealed about God's heart for us in the father's response to the younger son?

**Read 15:25-32**

5. How would you describe the older son?

Steve said:

It's interesting that most Bibles have the heading for this story as "The Prodigal Son" for in reality, it should be "The Parable of the Two Lost Sons." The lostness of the younger son is easy to see—he rejected the Father, left, wasted his life and all that the Father had given him and ended up destitute. The lostness of the elder brother is more subtle and more difficult to see. He stayed home, he worked hard and faithfully—never disobeying the Father's commands. And yet, as Jesus unwinds the final dialogue between the elder son and the Father we begin to see that he too has rejected the Father. He too is lost.

6. In what ways is the older son "lost"?
7. How has the older son viewed life with his father?
8. What is revealed about God's heart for us in the father's response to the older son?
9. In what ways, if any, have you tended to be like the older brother?
10. What have you sensed God saying to you through this parable of the two lost sons?