

WELCOME HOME

LUKE 15:11-24

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - OCTOBER 11, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:1-2, 11-24

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Share a story with the group about either:

- (1) A time when you were extremely homesick (what was the context?); or
- (2) An amazing homecoming that you experienced or witnessed

SERMON RECAP

Jesus is on a rescue mission. Luke 15 opens with tax collectors and “sinners” (people known for their sinful lifestyles) drawing near to Jesus and Jesus receiving them; the religious leaders grumble at this. Jesus answers those religious leaders with three parables: a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son (the “Prodigal Son”). Together, these parables ask us a hard question: why do we care so much about lost possessions and so little about lost people? The final parable, the Prodigal Son, teaches us what a lost person being found looks like – it is a parable of sin, repentance, and reconciliation with God.

From the parable of the prodigal son, we learned that:

- **We often desire God’s gifts while rejecting relationship with Him.** The younger son takes his inheritance while disrespecting and leaving his Father. This is the essence of sin.
- **Coming home involves acknowledging Two Things:** (1) “God, I need You” and (2) “God, I’ve sinned against You.”
- **The Father welcomes returning sinners with extraordinary, shocking love.** He sees us even before we’ve returned, He feels compassion, He runs, He embraces, He restores, and He celebrates.
- **The Father’s heart should shape our the culture of our church.** MBC’s vision to Reach One calls us to prayerfully and intentionally more towards others, to get to know them and to help them get to know Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

Read Luke 15:11-24 aloud as a group. Let group members share observations before moving into interpretation or application.

- 1) **Leaving Home. Verses 11-13.** From the prodigal son’s point of view, what did he think he was gaining by asking for his inheritance early? What was he willing to give up to get it? Picture his first few weeks in the far country with a “full bank account” and no one telling him what to do. What do you imagine he was feeling in those early days away from his Father?

- 2) **Far from Home. Verses 14–16.** Compare the son’s position in verse 15 with the position he walked away from in his Father’s house. What became of the freedom and fun he set out to find? For a Jewish listener, what would it have meant to be feeding pigs?
- 3) **Turning toward Home. Verses 17–19.** When the son “came to himself,” what does he admit about himself? What does he hope to receive from his Father?
- 4) **Welcomed Home. Verses 20–24.** Jesus could have simply said, “And the Father forgave him and took him back.” That alone would have shocked His listeners. Instead, Jesus piles on detail after detail. What do you observe in verses 20–24 that shows the Father’s love for sinners?

Interpretation: What does this passage mean?

- 1) **The deceitfulness and consequences of sin (vv. 11–16).** What do these verses reveal about sin’s deceitfulness and consequences (what does sin promise versus what sin actually delivers)?
- 2) **True repentance (vv. 17–21).** The son confesses both “I have sinned” and, in effect, “I need my father.” How is this different from simply wanting relief from hard circumstances?
- 3) **The father’s heart (vv. 20–24).** Reread verses 20–24. The father’s love is the most shocking part of this parable. Pastor Mike even described it as “*scandalous*.” The following questions are based on observations on how the father responds to his son.

Leader note: There’s no need to cover every question below, but feel free to linger here as it is the heart of the parable.

- **He sees the son from far away.** What does this suggest about the father’s attention, longing, active waiting for his son’s return?
 - **He feels compassion.** His son rejected him and squandered his gifts. What emotions would have been justified by the father? Why is compassion such a “scandalous” response?
 - **He runs.** Running was undignified for a respected father and estate owner in this culture, yet he runs anyway. What do we make of the father’s willingness to run even after how his son rejected him?
 - **He embraces and kisses him.** Having spent a lot of time among pigs, the son likely arrived filthy. What does the father communicate by embracing him *before* he gets cleaned up and even before he confesses?
 - **He gives him the best robe, a ring, and shoes.** How do these gifts answer the son’s claim that he is no longer worthy to be called a son? What do these gifts signify to everyone watching about the son’s place in the household going forward?
 - **He throws a feast.** What does it reveal about the father that his son’s return brings him such joy? How does it affect you to know that God doesn’t merely forgive returning sinners—He delights in welcoming them home?
- 4) **The cost of our welcome.** How does Jesus’s death and resurrection make it possible for sinners like us to be forgiven and welcomed home by the Father? How does knowing what this welcome cost God deepen our amazement at His love?
 - 5) **Bringing it back to MBC’s Reach One.** What does this parable have to do with MBC’s Reach One? Each of us was once the prodigal son, welcomed home by the lavish, scandalous love of the

Father. How does that reality (that we were lost, but now found) impact our desire to lock arms together as a church to Reach One person at a time who is still far from God?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

- 1) **If you are not a Christian, or if you aren't entirely sure about your relationship with God:** Do you feel the depth of love God freely offers you through Jesus today, irrespective of what is in your past? Is there a Christian in your life you could talk more with about what it means to trust Jesus?

If you are a Christian: Do you still stand in awe of the Father's lavish, scandalous love for you in spite of yourself? How does the shock of His love for you today compare with when you first trusted Christ? What can you do to walk daily in appropriate awe of the Father's love for you and grow in enjoying it?
- 2) What might it look like to embrace a "Reach One" lifestyle: (1) at church on Sundays, (2) in your neighborhood, (3) at your place of work, (4) or at your school? Are there any ways you've taken a small step towards people over the previous week? If so, how did it go?
- 3) What is your level of excitement right now about embracing MBC's Reach One vision and actively being part of it? If your level of excitement today is not where you want it to be, why is that? (E.g., busyness, fear of rejection, discomfort, doesn't fit with your personality, or something else?)
- 4) In addition to joining the broader MBC vision, what are some ways we as a church group can fully embrace this Reach One vision?
 - How can we pray for and support one another as we each reach our "one"?
 - When someone new comes to MBC or our group, what can we do to help them feel noticed, valued, and welcomed?
 - What will we commit to doing together? (Consider signing up for the Reach One Lab on November 8.)
- 5) Who is your "one," someone you long to see come home to faith in Jesus?
 - How can you get to know them better and love them well?
 - What is one concrete step you can take this week to help them know Jesus?
 - Spend some time at the end of your discussion praying for people by name that you all desperately want to see respond to the Father's love.

LEADER NOTES:

Two next steps to keep in front of your group:

- **Open House** is MBC's new low-pressure orientation **for newcomers**. It meets Sunday, October 25, at all locations. Invite a friend you've brought to church, or better yet, go with them.
- **Reach One Labs** is a hands-on training on how to get to know people and help them get to know Jesus. It meets Sunday, November 8, and you can register on your location's website.