

Rolling Hills Community Church
“Lost, Found and Celebrated”
March 30, 2008

“Celebrated”
Luke 15:25-32

“So they began to celebrate...”

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’” Vs. 25-27

- Jesus turns the story into a mirror for the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law
- Jesus continues to show God’s heart and His purpose in “seeking and saving that which was lost!

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’” Vs. 28-30

Although the older son never left home, he was just as lost as the younger...

- The older son was consumed by anger and resentment
(This is such a danger for those who have been Christians a long time)
- The older son demonstrates a sense of entitlement
- The older son has lost his sense of purpose and lost his knowledge of grace

“The more I reflect on the elder son in me, the more I realize how deeply rooted this form of lostness really is and how hard it is to return home from there. Returning home from a lustful escapade seems so much easier than returning home from a cold anger that has rooted itself in the deepest corners of my being. My resentment is not something that can be easily distinguished and dealt with rationally.”

Henri Nouwen, The Return of the Prodigal Son, Doubleday, 1992, p. 75

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’” Vs. 31-32

Notice how the Father runs to both sons. He does not scold, but simply invites to join the celebration!

The story is open-ended – we do not know how the story concludes. Jesus points out that the Father gives an invitation to the older son to come and join the party, but we do not know if the older son responded to the father's invitation. In the same way, our story is open-ended. The father extends to us an invitation to the party – what will we do?