



Sermon – June 20, 2021
Tim Skaggs

Verses Covered This Week

Luke 15

Psalm 51:2 - 4

Romans 5:5

Alright, as you're being seated, take your copy of God's word, turn to Luke chapter 15. Today we're going to look at what God the Father is like and so I will also say, happy Father's Day dads. We love you and appreciate you very much. Well, before we look at the text, let's go to the Lord in prayer. Pray with me.

Father, we love You and I pray today that we would see just how much You love us. Everyone in the room needs to hear that message. So Holy Spirit, I pray that You would bring it home to us today. That we would not just hear the truth, we would not just believe the truth, but we would, with all the passion of our being, live this truth out today for Your glory. And we love You. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Now, this is, as I was doing some study, as a matter of fact, I've never preached Luke 15. And many times, when a pastor says, "Hey, you can preach whatever you want." You've preached for a number of years, you just go back and get a sermon you've already preached. But the Lord told me to preach this one, OK. So we're in Luke 15 and some call it the parable of the prodigal Son. I would refer to it more as the parable of the loving father. And I'm going to preach the entire chapter so bear with me and pray for me that I can get it done quickly. And the reason I'm going to do that is because of the first couple of verses. Look very carefully what it says. It says:

¹Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him (being Jesus). ²Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Now understand, tax collectors were hated because they made money off the enslavement of their countrymen. So I understand that tax collectors were hated. When he says that sinners came to Him, what we need to realize is that to the Jew, the sinner was the Jew who had

renounced God, the law of God, and their nationality. The law said you were not to, so this was a Jew who had turned, who had stopped, said, "I don't want to be a Jew anymore." Alright? And so the law said, you're not to eat with them, you're not to talk with them. In fact, they're to be excommunicated from all of Israel. So you can see easily how the religious elite of the day would say, "This is how we believe God sees these people. I can't believe this Rabbi is receiving sinners and tax collectors." Now the Pharisees were basically Old Testament fundamentalists and they're complaining. And Jesus basically is saying this, "Boys, you have a problem with Me loving people. Let Me tell you a few stories." So, listen carefully as we look at a couple of stories before we get into verse 11, which is the story of the prodigal, or again, what I would say is the loving father. So, he has, everywhere Jesus went, there's a crowd of people around Him. So He's got a group of women there and He's got a group of men there. So He starts with the men. He says, "Let me tell you a story, men, that you can relate to. Which one of you having, being a shepherd and having a hundred sheep, if one of your sheep leaves and wanders, you know what you'd do? You'd leave the 99 and you'd go get the one because the one is valuable to you. And you would put it on your shoulders and you would bring it back and you would rejoice with all your friends that the one that is lost is found. That's basically what the first several verses say there in verses 4 through 7. So the idea is for you and me, an illustration, have you ever lost a beloved pet? Have you ever lost an animal, ok, that you really loved? I see some of you nodding. My wife and I, we don't have any dogs, we don't even have a goldfish, ok. We've got zero pets. We need help. We're bad people. We don't have any pets, alright. I get you. But here's the deal. We, right now, have a dog in our house. We would call this our granddog. Anybody ever been there? His name is Hucksley. He's an Aussie-Doodle. Which means he doesn't shed, thank You, Jesus. OK. And our kids are in Colorado and the grandkids for a couple of weeks and we have this dog, Hucksley, for two weeks. Now here's what you need to realize. They lived in Austin, Texas on a golf course for over 10 years. They've had the dog for 3 or 4 years, I think. They've now moved to Nacogdoches, but I'm not lying when I share this story. Every time we would go to visit them in Austin, every single time, at some point one of the kids comes in, "Hucksley got out. We don't know where Hucksley is." And here's what we'd do. We would stop everything we were doing, every one of us. We'd go up and down the streets, a couple of us. I've got the golf course. We'd get out on the golf course, you know, right during someone's backswing, "Hey! Have you seen a dog?" You know, that sort of thing. We'd drop what we were doing. We always found Hucksley, obviously, but we would drop whatever we were doing. Why? Because Hucksley is valuable to our family. He's valuable to our family. And so I want you to realize that I think we can relate to that, as a matter of fact, I've seen, you've seen flyers on telephone poles that say, "Have you seen this dog or have you seen this cat? Call this number. Reward for this animal." OK. We'll spend time and energy and money trying to get our animal back. So if people care that much about an animal, here's the point. How much more does God the Father care about humans? Alright?

Now look at the second story. He makes the same point but now He involves the women and He says, which women of you, if you were someone who had 10 coins and you lost one of the coins, there was a woman who did that. Well she lit a lamp, she went through her whole house, she found the coin, she called her friends, and rejoiced that she found the coin. The coin that was lost is now found. That's what you would do. Now here's what you need to understand. More than likely, we don't know we weren't told in the story, but more than likely, scholars believed, because it talked about 10 coins, that this coin was something she'd put together. It was a headdress. It was her dowry. Now she would wear that, saying, "I'm available." That's part of

why she would wear it. But also, each of those coins, basically was a symbol of part of her character. So if she lost one of the coins, this wasn't just losing a coin, this was losing a part of who she was. And so that's why she was so stressed about finding that coin. That coin in that dowry, headdress piece of jewelry, would be something perhaps she wore on her wedding day. She would then keep it, it's basically an heirloom, she would pass it on to her daughter one day, that sort of thing. So, ladies, have you ever lost a piece of jewelry that was valuable to you? Have you ever lost an heirloom? Aggies, have you ever lost your Aggie Ring? Oh no. Well, it reminded me, pretty good illustration, several years ago, of course I'm in Brownwood, pastor at Coggin Avenue Baptist Church. And our youth pastor reminded us, "Hey, the youth garage sale's coming up. Go see if you can find some junk in your shed or whatever, your garage and donate." So I went in and I looked around and I got 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 things. I loaded them up. Took them to the garage sale. Just so happened on that weekend of the garage sale, as a matter of fact that Saturday, Jamie comes in around noon and she said, "Have you seen this large, she said, you've probably seen it and I can't find it. But it looks like a plow, it looks like a giant sunflower, it's brown in the middle, it's got these spokes, and it's kind of like a farm implement, like a plow, like a farm rake or something." And I said, "Oh, yeah, I've seen it. I put it in the youth garage sale." True story. She said, "You did what?" I said, "Well, I went in the shed and it's probably been sitting there for about 5 years and I figured we didn't need it. So, yeah, what's the problem?" "That's my grandfather's plow. That's my grandfather's farm implement. That is an heirloom to me. Oops. Uh oh. I mean, I'm being very calm. It was not fun, OK. It was, I go, "Man, I have really messed up." She said, "Yes, you have." I said, "Hold on." So I made a phone, just happened to be the day that it was sold, I made a phone call and said, because I knew the lady that was down at the, running the table. I said, and I described it, she said, "Oh yeah, that sold right off the bat for \$5." I went, "OK, great." So I told Jamie, "It's gone. But I'll be back." And I drove to the ATM machine and withdrew \$100. And the church is in a residential area and I drove up and down, all around that church praying to Almighty God that I would find that metal artwork thing that her brother made for her that was her grandfather's, he went and found it in the barn, that family heirloom, and I was knock on the door if I saw it out there. I was going to go, "Hey, I'll give you \$100 bucks for that." I knew they'd paid \$5 and they would take the hundred. Guess what? I never found it. Never found it. But redemption draweth nigh. Could we see the screen? Could we see the screen? Her brother found another one. That's exactly what it looked like. So the next Christmas, her brother painted that. That's her grandfather's, put it on a piece of wrought iron, it's now in our back yard, and I'm not, Jamie has laid down a decree, a law; I'm not to go near that artwork, alright. I just weed eat around it and I bless it every time I go by. But that's what I'm saying here. So women can relate. If you've ever, in other words, if we will look that deeply and be hurt that deeply and care that much for an heirloom, how much more where will God the Father care about those who are made in His image? Now look what he says. Now we come to the prodigal son's story. Look in verse 11. He said, "A man had two sons." This story is told by Jesus the Son, about God the Father, to show how God feels about sinners. Because remember, you go back to the Pharisees going, "I can't believe you're loving these people." He's trying, this is more about God the Father than it is about the Son and we need to understand that. So here's the deal. Let's look at the younger son, verses 12 and 13:

¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them and ¹³not many days later, the younger

son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate on loose living.

Now we're going to look at this younger son and we're going to see how lost this younger son is. Because some people feel like, and maybe some of you in this room, I've gone too far. God can't reach me. He doesn't understand how much I have sinned. But that's why I believe this younger son is in here. Here's the first thing. This son was rude. The first thing we see, he says, "Father give me my inheritance. Give me my inheritance." Do you know, I'm sure you do, that most of the time the father would give the inheritance after he is dead, right? That's when you get the inheritance. So what the father heard him say, when this younger son said, "Give me my inheritance," here's what he heard. "I wish you were dead. I wish you were dead. Why don't you go ahead and die already because I care a lot more about the inheritance and what you can give me than who you are to me." That's what the father heard. This boy was rude. This boy was also immoral. Look what it said. He wasted it on loose living. As a matter of fact, if you go to verse 30, the older son said, "This son of yours has devoured your wealth with prostitutes." He was immoral. He's not only rude, he was immoral. He was also disloyal to his country. Said he moved to a distant country. Why? Because the law of God prevented that kind of lifestyle in Israel. He had to go to the Gentiles. This Jew had to go to some Gentiles that he was supposed to hate and not want to be near. So he was disloyal to his country. But here's the last one. He was selfish. He was selfish. He renounced his legacy. Now inheritance in that day, when a father gave a son some inheritance, he didn't give him money. He gave him land. He gave him possessions. I want you to listen to me and you'll get it. This land had been handed down for years and years and years. This land came from God through Joshua at the conquest of Canaan. This was family land. Anybody have family land; you don't want to part with it? Then you get it. This is land given by God through Joshua so he said, as soon as I get that land, I'm going to sell this land because this land doesn't mean anything to me. My heritage, my legacy in this family doesn't mean anything to me. Listen, several years ago I was visiting with my dad. My father, I preached his funeral a little over two years ago, so he's with Jesus right now. Praise God. But anyway, it was years before he came down with the stroke and we were visiting for the weekend. And somehow they got to talking about what would y'all want after we're gone. And I said, "Well, dad, I just want two things. If I get anything else, it's fine, but I just want two things. I want the Savage 22 Hornet that you have. I love that Savage 22 Hornet rifle. And then I want the pearl handled, nine-shot 22 pistol." My dad and I hunted all the time and we shot guns all the time and I said, "That's going to help me, just remind me of you. And when you're dead and gone, I want the Savage 22 Hornet and the 22 pistol, nine-shot pearl handle revolver." And he said, "OK." Well, a couple hours later, we're getting ready to leave and my dad walks in with that rifle. He walks up with that pistol and he lays them at my feet and I went, "Glory." I said, "What are you giving them to me now for? I've seen them." I thought he was wanting me to look at them. He said, "Look, I just got thinking about it, I don't shoot them much anymore and I'd rather enjoy you having fun with those guns and enjoying those guns while I'm still alive." Now my dad's been gone for a little over two years. I still have the 22 hornet, I still have the pearl handled 22 pistol. The day I die, I will have that pistol and that rifle. Now my kids can do with it whatever they want. I know my kids. They're going to sell it in about 10 minutes, alright? That's OK. I'm with Jesus. I don't care what they do. Alright? But I am not lying, some of you have something from your parents or your grandparents you will not part with, right, no matter what the cost, what someone offers to give you. Now, there's some young people going, "You can get other guns. I don't get this." But if someone literally came up today

and offered me a million dollars for the rifle and a million dollars for that pistol, I would not take it because it's my daddy's. He took this gift from dad and God and sold it. This boy was selfish. He was rude, he was immoral, he was disloyal to his country, he was selfish. Here's the best way to say it: this boy was sorry. This boy was sorry.

Now, what happens when you live for yourself? Here's the picture of what happens, how you end up in 14 and 15.

¹⁴Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, he began to be impoverished. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, a Gentile, and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. ¹⁶He would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating.

Here's the first thing he did that Jew normally wouldn't do. Here's how lost he is. He hires himself out to a Gentile. So that's bad enough. But not only that, this Gentile was a pig farmer. If you know anything about Jews, they don't want to have anything to do with pigs. So he hires him out to a pig farmer, he spends time with the pigs. Here's the third thing. He was so humiliated; he was so humbled that he was jealous of the pigs. He desired to eat what the pigs were eating. This young man was about as low as you could get. He was at rock bottom, and that's important to the story.

Now I want you to see this. In verses 17 through 20 we see a turn here. We see God working. These verses and those to follow are some of the strongest examples of the salvific process in all of the word of God. Meaning that what we see in these verses, specifically 17 through 20, is what had to happen to this young man for him to be reunited in new relationship with his father. These three things I'm about to show you did happen to you if you came to faith in Jesus. These three things happened to you. If you're here today and you don't have a relationship with God the Father, these three things must happen to you in order for you to have a relationship with the Father. Here they are: conviction, confession, repentance. If you're taking notes, you right those three words down. Conviction, confession, repentance. Look what it says. Conviction, verse 17. When he came to his senses. Now that's a work of the Holy Spirit. You've got a family member or a friend or a co-worker or a neighbor and you've been concerned about their salvation, the first thing you need to pray is, Holy Spirit open their eyes. Open their eyes. Help them to see their sin and see their need. That's what the Holy Spirit did to this young boy. I mean, he was such a mess. If he could come to his senses on his own, he would have come to his senses a long time before he ended up in the pig pen jealous of the pigs. But he couldn't because salvation is a work of the Father. It's a work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit helped him come to his senses which means for the first time he saw how needy he was and he saw his sin. And the reason you need to pray that for the person you're concerned about is because the Holy Spirit is real good at His job. He's real good at his job. So conviction is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Look at the second thing that has to happen. Confession. Verses 18 and 19. He said, I will go to my father, say I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. This is our part. This is the boy's part. I agree with what the Holy Spirit just showed me that I am a sinner and I am in deep need. But I agree even more that I not only sinned against my father, I sinned against heaven. Now hang on to that thought and I want you to go to Psalm 51:2 through 4. You need to see this.

True brokenness, true confession is not “I’m sorry I got caught.” You know this but listen to it. It’s what I love about this, as a matter of fact, my little subtitle here, or title to Psalm 51 is: a contrite sinner’s prayer for pardon. This is David praying here. Look what he says. Verses 2 through 4:

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin! ³I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Now look at this. This is why he sees what he sees.

⁴Against you, and you only, I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Now listen, did he sin against Bathsheba when he committed adultery with her? Absolutely. Did he sin against her husband when he had her husband put on the front line of the battle so her husband would, in effect, be murdered? He committed adultery and murder. He sure did. Did he sin against the nation of Israel? Absolutely. But his prayer, don’t miss this, in Psalm 51, God what I’m concerned about, what has broken me is not that I’ve sinned against other people or against myself, I have sinned against who you are. I’ve sinned against your law. I’ve broken your law; I’ve broken your heart. Heavenly Father, I have sinned against you. It’s the same prayer we see with this boy. He confesses, I’ve sinned against God.

And then look at the last one: repentance. Look at verse 20. First part of that verse. So he got up and came to his father. Now here’s the important part. There’s a lot of folk in here today, you’ve been convicted by the Holy Spirit. He’s real good at His job. You’ve confessed it and said, “I agree, Holy Spirit. This is wrong. This is sin. It breaks the heart of the Father. I’m sorry. God, I’m sorry I’ve hurt you. I’m sorry, God, that this sin that I’m committing killed your Son on the cross. It cost the life of your Son.” You say, “Well, how come I hadn’t changed?” Because you haven’t done the third part. It’s called repentance. He got up and he said, “I’m going to my father. I’m going to change. I’m going to stop going my way. I’m going to repent or turn and I’m going to go my father’s way.” Conviction, confession, repentance. Look at verse 19. He said, “I’m just going to ask dad if I can be a hired servant.” Now if you don’t do a lot of study, you don’t really get that. The hired servant was the day laborer, there were three types of servants, it was the lowest of the low. The day laborers were hired on a daily basis. Sometimes on an hourly basis. They didn’t know if they were going to have a job the next day. Hey, if we’ve got work, you can work. If we don’t, you can’t. He’s not asking to be the other type in the tier, or the rung of servants, just make me the lowest of the low. Why did he say that? Why did he say that? Because he’s sorry, ok. I mean, he’s a bum. I get that. We see that. But he’s no dummy. He knew Deuteronomy. He knew the law. You know what the law said? Very clear. If you have a son, he is rebellious and he will not repent, you’re to take the elders of your town, go outside the gates of the city, and stone your boy to death. That’s what the law in Deuteronomy said you’re supposed to do. So what he’s thinking is, I’m just going to go back and beg my father, “Don’t kill me. Just make me a hired servant.” Now look what happens, we want to really focus here, verses 23 through 24. Here is what God the Father is like, and I want to read this. Look what it says:

²⁰But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, felt compassion for him, he ran and embraced him and he kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, he started is spiel,

“Father, I’ve sinned against heaven and in your sight and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

And the next line was supposed to be, “Make me just one of your hired servants. Don’t kill me.” In other words. But the father stopped him.

²²Father said to his slaves, “Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, put a ring on his hand, sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it, let us eat, celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead, he has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.” And they began to celebrate.

Why did the father see him while he was a long way off? I’ll tell you why. Listen, because this is what God the Father is like, because every day the father was looking for him. Every day the father was looking for him. Now the strict Jew, to the strict Jew, I want you to hear this, they believed that God would have nothing to do with the sinner. God is so holy, in Habakkuk it says He can’t even look upon evil. So I get some of that thought. But they believed that God is so holy He will not even look at a sinner. He will not negotiate with a sinner. He doesn’t want to have anything to do with a sinner. But perhaps if you catch God on a good day, if the sinner were to come humbly broken with hat in hand, God might listen to him. That’s what they believed was God’s relationship which was no relationship at all really to a sinner. That’s how God looked at a sinner. Jesus just shocked them with this story because if they read what we’re reading here, if they hear what we’re reading here, here’s what they understand. Here’s the heart of the father, watch this, the father seeks the sinner. The father looks for the sinner. The father goes out seeking to save those who are lost. And then look at verse 20. He felt compassion. He ran towards him. Again, salvation’s initiated by the Father. In the original language when it says he kissed him, it means this, he kissed him and he kissed him and he kissed him and he kissed him. This is a story about the father. Salvation’s a work of God. Interesting thing is the son, again he interrupted him, the son never got to ask, can I just be a hired servant. And he never brought up the rebellion of the son. You see, that’s why I love to call this the parable, the story, of the loving father. He immediately said, this son of mine is lost, he’s now found. I’m going to give him immediately, he wanted him to know this, this is how immediate this is. You don’t have to work for it. I’ve done the work for you. You don’t have to work for it. I’m going to restore you to sonship, bringing the best robe, that’s the honor of sonship. Put the ring on his finger, that’s the authority of sonship, because that ring was the signet ring, most scholars believe, that had the family crest which means he now could help control the estate. I restore you back to that son who can control my estate. I’m going to put you back in the highest rank that you could possibly have. And then put the sandals on his feet. You see, this boy showed up, he didn’t have any sandals, he was disheveled, he was beaten up, he was dirty, he was filthy, he smelled like a bunch of pigs in the pigpen, and he said, “Put some sandals on his feet.” That status of the family. You know why? I didn’t know this until you do a little study. Slaves didn’t wear sandals. Slaves went around barefoot all the time because you didn’t want them wandering far. Only those who were family members, only people in the family, wore sandals. See, this shows me, was this boy horrible to his dad? Absolutely, we painted that picture. But this father had so much grace and mercy and love towards his son. He never stopped loving him. He never stopped having that kind of grace and that kind of mercy. We didn’t all have a perfect father, as a matter of fact, none of us had a perfect father. None of us are perfect. God is the perfect father. That’s why the Scripture says, by grace you’ve been saved through faith; that, not of

yourselves. That salvation is a gift from God. That faith is a gift from God, not of works, so no one can boast.

Now we have to tell the rest of the story. He had another son, verses 25 through 32, and that son was out in the field and he heard the celebrating. And if you've read the story, which I know you have, he wasn't happy about it. Let's look at the other son. Verse 28:

²⁸His father came out pleading with him.

Let me tell you a little bit about this other son. This other son who didn't leave before, this other son was disrespectful to his father also. You look at what it says. Don't miss this in verse 28.

²⁸He became angry, was not willing to go in.

See, the servants went and said, your boy's out here, your older boy, and he's not happy. He wants you to talk to him. No, he wants to come, send him in to talk to me. He said, "I'm not going to go in." Look what it says.

²⁸And his father had to come out and begin pleading with him.

His heart was disrespectful to the father as well. I'm not going to go talk to that man. He's going to have to come in and beg me. That is disrespectful to his father. And look at verse 29. Verse 29, about the middle, said:

²⁹I've never neglected a command of yours.

When he finally talked to him, he said, "You know what? I've never done anything wrong." Is there anybody in here that could say that? I've never done anything wrong. Anybody? Alright, that's what I thought. That's being self-righteous. See, this son was not only disrespectful, he was self-righteous. I've never done anything wrong. I've always kept every command you gave me. Liar. Lie. Look at the third thing and this is the big one. Then he says in verse 30:

³⁰This son of yours spent it all on prostitutes.

Now don't miss that. It's subtle, but I want you to get it. He described his brother to his father. This son of yours. You know what he just did? He just accused his father. He just made accusation to his father. What he's saying is, the only reason this boy's like this is because of you. You know what the Bible says, the Bible says who the accuser is? He just accused his father. You know who the accuser is? The devil. This boy emulates the devil. Now here's my point. Do not miss this point. You can be lost with the pigs and you can be lost in the pews. You hear me? It's what this story teaches us. You can be lost with the pigs. You can be lost in the pews. Now here's the question that I have to ask when I think about application. Why is this text here? Well, I think go all the way back to the religious elite of the day were saying, "I don't think God loves sinners. I don't think He loves people. He may be Father, but He doesn't really love people." I think it's here because God the Son wants people to know what God the Father is like so that, don't miss this, so we can be like God the Father to this lost and dying world. They don't see God, they see you and me. So what's God like? Listen, we need His heart and His

heart is a heart of seeking the sinner, going after those that are lost, and loving people well. He loves the beat up and He loves the self-righteous. And if you here today have put your faith and trust in Jesus, you have a relationship with God the Father through the Son Jesus Christ, then you don't just need to desire His love, watch this, Romans 5:5, go ahead and turn there. You have that kind of agape love in you. You have the Father's love. Stop desiring the Father's love. Don't even pray, "God give me that kind of love for people." You already have it according to Romans 5:5. Let's look at it. And here's what it says.

⁵and hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

So that you and I will have the ability to fulfill the greatest commandment which is love God and love others. If you today would say, "I'm a believers and receiver of Jesus, I'm a follower of Christ. I have this kind of relationship, this wonderful relationship with God the Father through Christ." Then that means the moment you did it, for me it was 9 years of age, the Holy Spirit of God puts that love of God, that agape love of God, inside my soul and spirit. So I've already got that kind of love. And you know what? That kind of love is the greatest evangelistic track that we have as a church. Jesus, in the upper room, said to His disciples, "By this all men will know you're My disciples, if you have love for one another." It is, we don't need to underestimate the power of love. Let's just go local here. Let's just go intimate here within this body of believers that we call Central Church, Central Church family. Said, here's the best way, you're going to make impact out there, is that we all deeply love one another, not with the love we conjure up, but with the Father's love. Even when we mess up, even when we go prodigal, even when we don't say everything the right way, even when I don't preach the sermon the way I ought to preach it. Now here's the deal. I get that the world doesn't love us. I'm not shocked by that. I get it. What did Jesus say? They hated Me, they're going to hate you. I get that the world doesn't love us. But every church I've been in, it's not just this church, every church I've been in I see people sometimes fighting each other, other family members. See I get the world not loving us. What I don't get is that when we don't love us. That's what I don't get. That's what I don't get. We're family. We're family. And I'll just be honest with you. I'm not openly critical, that's not my nature, but God has began over this last year to convict me, there are times I'm critical in my spirit of another brother or sister in Christ. And the Holy Spirit's told me, "Don't do that. Don't do that. You love them like I love them." See, I get it when the world doesn't love us. I don't get it when we don't love us well and I hope and pray for every church in this community, in the United States, all over the world, will start loving each other better so that we can what? Show the world the love of the Father. That's what that means. Now three sons in this text; the son who wandered, the son who stayed, and the son who told the story. And the son who told the story just a few days after that story will live out John 15:13. Here's what it says, John 15:13. He'll live it out just a few days from telling that story.

¹³Greater love has no one than this, than one lay down his life for his friends.

This kind of agape love of the Father is in you and me. Why? So we can show the world what the Father is like.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would take this word and this truth, Holy Spirit, and You would drive it into our heart as only You can. And I pray if there's anyone here within the sound of my voice through the teaching of Your truth and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, would say, "I'm a sinner. I can't save myself. I need to put my faith and trust in the one who went to the cross to pay for my sin. Came out of the grave three days later conquering sin and death. I deeply want to be united, reunited with my Father. I want to know God." I pray they'll put their faith and trust in You even today.