

Group Study Outline

Luke 15:11-32

Theme Sentence

It is God's plan - and Jesus' priority - to find the lost.

Launching Question

We often talk about our *badness* keeping us out of heaven. Can you think of ways in which our *goodness* might also keep us out of heaven?

READ Luke 15:11-32

Use the table opposite to draw up a comparison between the two sons.

The younger brother

Think more about the younger brother: what does this story say to the person who feels that they have made a *mess* of their life?
Why is it 'fitting to celebrate and be glad' (32) whenever a lost soul is found?

The older brother

Think more about the older brother: what does this story say to the person who feels that they have made a *success* of their life?
Why does the older brother refuse to go into the party (in 28)?
What thoughts and attitudes lie behind what he says in 29-30?
In what ways does the older brother have a point?
Is grace and forgiveness fundamentally unjust/unfair?
Why doesn't the younger brother have to prove that he's cleaned up his life before the father lavishes 22-23 on him? How do we know that the younger brother is genuine?
Look back to Luke 15:1-2.
Why does Jesus tell these parables to the Pharisees and scribes?
In what ways are the Pharisees and scribes similar to the older brother?
How does this story fit with the context of 13:24-30 and 14:16-24?
Why might the Pharisees and scribes find themselves 'outside' the banquet?
Why doesn't Jesus end the story by telling us what the older brother does?

The Punch-lines

Think again about the question we considered last week: why do the first two parables refer to the sinner who repents (in 7, 10) when neither the sheep nor coin repent? and why is v32 the conclusion to a parable about repentance?!

What is the connection between repentance ... and being lost-and-found?
What part does God play and what part do we play in our salvation?

Thinking it through

In what ways do we behave like the older brother?
Summarise Jesus' warning to anyone who is like the older brother.

This is not a straightforward question, so you'll need to think carefully about what it's getting at. But I think it is a good question, so do persevere!

	younger brother (verses 11-24)	older brother (verses 25-32)
initial attitude to father		
attitude to money/inheritance		
how they spend time		
attitude to personal behaviour		
concluding attitude to father		
attitude to party		
reaction of father to ...		
etc etc		