

Behave, Believe, Belong

vs.

Belong, Believe, Behave

## **Luke 15:1-2**

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

**Religious people create two categories: Who’s in and who’s out**

## **Luke 15:3-7: The Lost Sheep**

## **Luke 15:8-10: The Lost Coin**

## **Luke 15:11:32: The Two Lost Sons**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup> “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

<sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

<sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

## **The Trifecta of Jewish Shame**

1. Dishonor your family
2. Squander your inheritance
3. Work with unclean animals

<sup>17</sup> “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer wor-

thy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’” <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

## **The Trifecta of the Father’s Love**

1. He longs for him
2. He runs to him
3. He touches him even though his son is “unclean”

<sup>21</sup>“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

<sup>22</sup>“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put

it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup>For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

### **The older brother is lost too...**

<sup>22</sup>“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

<sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup>‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

<sup>28</sup>“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup>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.

<sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

<sup>31</sup>“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>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.’”

### **Romans 12:2**

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. We need our minds renewed.

### **Three Suggestions**

1. Stop trying to convert people. Simply love people.
2. Share a meal.
3. Listen for opportunities.

### **Small Group Questions**

1. Have you ever lost anything important? Tell about the hunt to find it. What happened?
2. It’s obvious from Luke 15 that Jesus cares for lost people. Do you see this happening in your religious circles? Why or why not?
3. In your sphere of influence, would you identify anyone as particularly “lost”? Lost in what way?
4. What are you doing anything to help people belong (even if they don’t believe or behave in the same manner as you)? If not, what could you do?
5. Pray for each other’s requests. Also pray that God would give you Jesus’ heart of compassion for lost people.

**OUR  
MISSION**

To create an authentic Christian community that effectively reaches out to unchurched people in love, acceptance and forgiveness so that they may experience the joy of salvation and a purposeful life of discipleship.