

Luke 15:25-32

"Mercy and Grace"

December 14, 2025

1. Intro

- a. Well, last week we began our 3-week journey through Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son
 - i. We spent last Sunday looking at this Parable from the perspective of the younger son
 1. This younger son had all that he needed in the house of his father,
 - a. But it just wasn't enough for him, was it?
 - i. The lure of the far country was too great
 - ii. The promise of temptation was too powerful
 - iii. The desires of his own flesh were too irresistible
 2. So the young son went to his father...
 - a. He demanded his share of his inheritance
 - b. And he went off to the far country to squander it all in reckless living
 - i. BUT... an incredible thing happened to this young son when he reached the depth of his depravity
 1. As he was standing there in the pigsty, broke and filthy and starving
 - a. The younger son finally reached the end, and he came to himself
 - ii. His eyes were finally opened to see all that he had left behind
 - iii. His eyes were finally opened to see how foolish he had been
 3. And so, the son who was once prideful and demanding, now returned to his father in humility and repentance
 - a. And in a wonderfully unexpected twist, Jesus says in his Parable that the father saw the young son from a long way off,
 - i. And the father RAN to him
 1. Not to rebuke him, although the younger son certainly DESERVED a rebuke
 2. Not to discipline him by making him serve as one of his hired hands, although the younger son certainly DESERVED to be disciplined
 - ii. No, Jesus says that the father ran to the son, for he was full of COMPASSION for the son
 1. And in his compassion, the father embraced his wayward son...
 2. He clothed him in the best of his robes...
 3. And he threw a big party as they feasted over the fattened calf
 4. The story of the Prodigal Son is the story of one who finally came to see the joy of abiding in his father's house
 - a. It is the story of one who realized that the pursuit of all of his self-centered desires had only led him to sorrow and shame
 - b. It is the story of one who came to himself, and finally had the eyes to see what a GOOD father he truly had
 - i. It is a wonderful story for ALL OF US who have, at one time or another, taken our eyes off of OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN,
 1. And been tempted and enticed by the desires of our flesh and the desires of this world

- ii. From the perspective of the YOUNGER son, this Parable reminds us that our Father is GOOD and GRACIOUS and full of COMPASSION
 - 1. And if we would simply DIE to ourselves, then we could turn and realize that He is standing right there
 - a. Ready to embrace us
 - b. Ready to clothe us in the robe of righteousness
 - c. Ready to celebrate over our return
 - i. I think we would all agree, from the perspective of the younger son, this Parable is quite possibly one of Jesus' BEST Parables that he ever told!
- iii. But Jesus is not done with the Parable, is he?
 - 1. For there is ANOTHER son in this story... the OLDER son
 - a. This is the GOOD son... the OBEDIENT son... the son who had done EVERYTHING right
 - i. But, as we will see this morning, Jesus has JUST AS MUCH to teach us through the older son's heart, as he did through the younger son
 - 1. So let's look now at Luke 15, starting in verse 25

2. Luke 15:25-32

- a. *²⁵Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'*
- b. Well, we'll see in just a few moments that there is certainly A LOT of application for us in the story of the older son
 - i. But we need to realize that there is an immediate context that Jesus is speaking to in this story
 - 1. A couple of weeks ago, Seth preached on the first two parables of Luke 15,
 - a. The Parable of the Lost Sheep, and the Parable of the Lost Coin
 - i. Just like the Parable of the Prodigal Son, these two Parables were Parables of redemption and celebration
 - 1. But Jesus didn't just start telling these Parables out of nowhere
 - a. He was prompted by the events that were surrounding him in that moment
 - 2. Look at verses 1 and 2 at the beginning of the chapter...
 - a. *¹Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*
 - i. In the first two Parables, Jesus is showing his audience WHY he receives sinners and eats with them
 - 1. Because when the lost tax collectors are FOUND, heaven resonates with the sound of JOY

2. When the sinners are drawn to him and they are FOUND, the angels shout out in JOY
- ii. For they are the ones whose eyes have been open to their sinful rebellion against their Father in heaven
 1. And they have responded in REPENTANCE
 - a. We see that as well in the younger son of this larger Parable
3. But what about the OLDER son?
 - a. Well, he's standing there, GRUMBLING
 - i. JUST LIKE the Pharisees and the Scribes were doing
 - b. The older son was a hard worker
 - i. He wasn't off recklessly frolicking around in sin and self-indulgence
 1. No, he was in the field, WORKING
 - a. As all dutiful and obedient sons ought to be
 2. But, when this older son saw the father welcoming back the wayward son who had devoured his property with prostitutes
 - a. That was just too much for the older son
 - i. He became ANGRY with his father
 - ii. And he GRUMBLED that HE had never received such lavish treatment from their father
- ii. Clearly, Jesus is speaking directly to the grumbling of the Scribes and the Pharisees when he decided to include the older brother in this Parable
 1. The religious leaders in Israel had forgotten who they were supposed to be, hadn't they?
 - a. The Temple in Jerusalem was still a place of active sacrifices and ceremonies, as the priest dutifully followed the Law of God
 - i. There were synagogues in every town and village where the rulers of the synagogues would still faithfully proclaim the words of the Old Testament
 1. The Scribes and Pharisees travelled throughout all of Judea and Galilee,
 - a. Making sure all the people of Israel were upholding the Law as they should
 - b. But when Jesus saw the great crowds, he was moved to compassion toward them,
 - i. For he realized that they were thousands upon thousands of sheep without shepherds
 1. The vast majority of the religious leaders were like blind guides who didn't truly know the way to the light
 2. They were like white-washed tombs that looked really good on the outside, but they were cold and heartless on the inside
 - c. When they should have been showing mercy and grace to the tax collectors and sinners, helping them to see the love and kindness and compassion of their Father
 - i. The Scribes and Pharisees instead looked upon the lost with arrogance and disgust
 1. They had been entrusted to be the shepherds of the people of God

2. But instead, they chose to be ANGRY with God, and they grumbled that God would show such unjust mercy to those who had done NOTHING to earn it
- d. So Jesus called them out for it, and he exposed the sin of THEIR hearts
 - i. And we're going to see in chapter 16, after we come back from Christmas,
 1. That Jesus will continue to speak Parable after Parable against these religious leaders,
 - a. As they chase after position and power and prosperity
 - b. Rather than chasing after the heart of God
 2. So, Jesus is certainly speaking to the grumbling of the Scribes and Pharisees as he shares the story of the older son
 - a. But there is plenty of application for us here today, isn't there?
- c. We'll spend the rest of our time this morning looking at three different types of hearts that we see in this section of the Parable...
 - i. We'll start with a heart of SELF-CENTEREDNESS
 - ii. Then we'll look at a heart of COLDNESS
 - iii. And we'll close by looking at a heart of GLADNESS
 1. And to illustrate these three kinds of hearts, we're going to do a comparison study of two other sons found in the Scriptures...
 - a. David, the great king over all of Israel,
 - b. And Judas, the great traitor to the ETERNAL King over Israel
3. So first, this Parable shows us what it looks like to have a heart of SELF-CENTEREDNESS
 - a. This was the undeniable sin of the older brother, wasn't it?
 - i. I mean, if he had TRULY been a good and loving and protective big brother, then he would have ALSO rejoiced when his little brother came home
 1. But that's not what he did at all – for his heart was fully centered around HIMSELF
 - a. Now, what's interesting is that was the very same sin of the younger brother too, wasn't it?
 - i. The whole reason why the younger brother demanded his inheritance and left his family was because he was unashamedly self-centered
 1. He didn't care about hurting his father's feelings
 2. He didn't care about any kind of financial bind his demands might have put the family in
 3. He didn't care about all the work that was still left out in the fields that his older brother was now going to have to work EVEN HARDER to do
 - ii. All the younger son cared about was himself
 1. And so he ran off and wasted everything
 2. But, at the root of the OLDER son's anger and grumbling, there was the VERY SAME sin
 - a. All HE cared about was HIMSELF
 - i. He had worked hard for years, and HE never got a young goat to have for a feast
 - ii. He had served faithfully and obediently all of his life, and HE never got to have a big party with his friends
 1. Because the older son's heart was full of self-centeredness, his actions became full of sin
 - b. We see this in the life of King David, don't we?

- i. In the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, we see the rise of this young shepherd to the very throne of Israel
 1. The first king of Israel, King Saul, is killed in battle because of God's displeasure against him
 - a. In 2 Samuel, chapter 2, David is anointed to be King over the tribe of Judah
 - b. In 2 Samuel, chapter 5, David is anointed to be King over ALL of Israel
 - c. And then, in chapter 7, God speaks to David through the prophet Nathan, and He gives this incredible promise to David,
 - i. *¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom FOREVER. ¹⁴I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵but my steadfast love WILL NOT DEPART FROM HIM, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure FOREVER before me. Your throne shall be established FOREVER."*
 1. SUCH an amazing promise given to David
 - a. And we see from the testimony of the rest of the Scriptures that this promise – this COVENANT – would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ
 - i. Through JESUS, the TRUE Son of David, the throne would be established FOREVER
 - ii. Through JESUS, the TRUE Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Kingdom of God would be made sure, FOREVER
 - b. This is the New Covenant, the EVERLASTING Covenant, that we who are disciples of Jesus Christ have entered into
 - i. And it is a GLORIOUS Covenant indeed
 2. But this Covenant began with just an ordinary king, just an ordinary man, King David
 - a. And so, in chapters 8-10 of 2 Samuel, we see David's kingdom growing more and more established
 - i. He sees victory after victory over his enemies
 - ii. He serves the kingdom of his Father in heaven with hard work, and faithfulness, and self-sacrifice
 3. But then, in chapter 11, EVERYTHING changes
 - a. This chapter begins with an ominous tone... verse 1 says,
 - i. *¹In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.*
 1. The writer of this book clearly wants us to understand what is going on here
 - a. "In the spring of the year, the time WHEN KINGS GO OUT TO BATTLE..."
 - i. King David stayed home

2. When ALL OF ISRAEL had gone out to wage war against the Ammonites...
 - a. King David remained at Jerusalem
 - i. We're given no indication that anything is wrong with David
 - ii. He's not sick or unwell in any way
 - b. He simply chose to stay at home, when he should have been out leading his people
 - i. King David made a self-centered decision
4. And this self-centered decision, as so many self-centered decisions so often do, led to MORE self-centered decisions
 - a. Late one afternoon, David is strolling around on the roof of his house, and he looks down, and he sees Bathsheba, who just happened to be bathing as she purified herself from her uncleanness
 - i. And, in the span of just a couple of verses, David decides he must have this woman for himself
 1. He sends someone to get her and bring her to him
 2. And King David chose to have an affair with this married woman
 - a. David had EVERYTHING he needed under the Covenant that God Himself had promised
 - b. He had been a faithful and obedient son for many years
 - ii. But, just like the older son in Jesus' Parable looked at the feasting and the fattened calf that was given to the younger son, and his heart became full of self-centered ENTITLEMENT
 1. So also did David look upon Bathsheba – even though he HIMSELF was already married as well
 - a. And his heart became entitled
 - i. Just like the older brother
 1. Because David's heart was full of self-centeredness, his actions became full of sin
 - c. We see this same story in the life of a man named Judas Iscariot, don't we?
 - i. Judas makes his first appearance in the New Testament in chapter 10 of the Gospel of Matthew
 1. Jesus had already been ministering for a while...
 - a. He's already chosen some of his disciples
 - i. Peter and his brother Andrew
 - ii. James and his brother John
 - iii. Matthew the tax collector
 - b. He's already preached the incredible Sermon on the Mount
 - c. He's already been casting out demons, healing the sick, and proclaiming the Kingdom of God
 2. But in Matthew 10, the Twelve Apostles are officially named, with Judas rounding out the list at the end
 - a. Just think about what it would have meant to be one of the Twelve
 - i. They got a front row seat to EVERY miracle, EVERY healing, EVERY amazing teaching
 - b. And we only get a few of the biggest highlights in the Scriptures

- i. Think about all those long walks that the Twelve got to have with Jesus, as they travelled from village to village
 - ii. Think about the many nights as they ate their dinners over the warmth of a campfire, and Jesus engaged with them in personal conversations
 - iii. Think about the tremendous blessing it would have been to be a part of the inner circle of the Twelve
 - 1. And Judas Iscariot was one of these Twelve!
 - a. Judas had EVERYTHING he needed in the presence of the Son of God
- 3. But, just like 2 Samuel 11 opened with an ominous tone, so also does Matthew 10 open with an ominous tone in introducing the Twelve
 - a. For, in verse 4, we read the last name of the Twelve Apostles,
 - i. *⁴... and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.*
 - b. In Mark's Gospel, he is introduced in the same way in chapter 3, verse 19...
 - i. *¹⁹... and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*
 - c. Luke says it this way in Luke 6:16...
 - i. *¹⁶... and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*
 - d. And John introduces Judas with these sobering words in John 6, starting in verse 66...
 - i. *⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." ⁷¹He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.*
- 4. What would lead a man who walked in the presence of the Son of God to ultimately BETRAY the Son of God
 - a. Well, we'll see that it is eventually the influence of the devil himself that plays a role in this betrayal
 - i. But where it all started was the fact that Judas' heart was FULL of self-centeredness
 - 1. Just like the older son in the Parable
 - 2. Just like David on the rooftop watching Bathsheba
 - a. Judas' self-centered heart was a heart of ENTITLEMENT
- 5. We see this in John, chapter 12, as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anoints Jesus' feet with some VERY expensive ointment
 - a. And John writes in verse 4,
 - i. *⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵"Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.*
 - 1. Self-centeredness
 - 2. Entitlement
 - 3. GRUMBLING

6. What we see going on in Judas' heart is just as shocking as what we saw with King David
 - a. Again, Judas walked WITH JESUS... for months... even YEARS
 - i. He saw all that Jesus did
 - ii. He heard all that Jesus proclaimed
 1. He KNEW that Jesus had chosen HIM to be a part of the Twelve
 - a. And yet none of this was enough for Judas
 - b. So, like King David, he stole what did not belong to him
2. Because Judas' heart was full of self-centeredness, his actions became full of sin
3. We see this first kind of heart in the older son, and in David, and in Judas
 - a. But we see the second kind of heart in all three as well...

4. A heart of COLDNESS

- a. You can just feel the iciness in the actions of the older son here in Luke 15
 - i. When he heard about the father's reception of the younger son, the older son was ANGRY, and he refused to come into the house
- b. You can feel the coldness in his words as he says to his father,
 - i. *²⁹'LOOK, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when THIS SON OF YOURS came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!'*
 1. The older son couldn't even address the younger son as his brother
 - a. He was so angry that all he can say is "this son of yours..."
 2. Friends, this is the inevitable result of a heart that CONTINUES in its self-centeredness
 - a. The younger brother ALSO was filled with the sin of self-centeredness
 - i. But he came to himself
 - ii. He repented
 - iii. And he turn back to his father
 3. But not the older brother
 - a. The older brother couldn't let go
 - i. The older brother couldn't see past his own sinful desires
 1. And so, as he held on tightly to his self-centeredness, his heart grew cold toward everyone else
- c. This was what we see in David's story as well, isn't it?
 - i. In 1 Chronicles, chapter 11, we get a list of thirty men who served under King David
 1. These were his MIGHTY men... his valiant warriors who were willing to do anything for their King
 - a. In this list, in 1 Chronicles 11:41, we get the name of one man...
 - i. Uriah the Hittite
 - ii. Uriah the Hittite was Bathsheba's husband
 1. David, in the sin of his self-centered entitlement, had an affair with the wife of one of his most valiant warriors
 - b. Back in 2 Samuel 11, we read that David tries to quietly manipulate the situation
 - i. And so he brings Uriah back home to be with his wife, so maybe he will lay with her
 1. And then everyone will think that this baby that is now in Bathsheba's womb will be Uriah's son, and not David's

- a. But Uriah the Hittite is a noble man, an honorable soldier
 - b. He refuses to go home to be with his wife while all his other soldiers are out in the battlefield
 - i. And David's deceptive scheming comes unraveled
 - 2. So what then does David decide to do with his mighty warrior?
 - a. He sends Uriah back to the front lines
 - b. He orders the other commanders to withdraw from the battle while Uriah is fighting
 - c. He seals the death of one of Israel's finest men
 - i. And David responds to the news that Uriah was killed in battle by basically saying,
 - 1. "Oh well, that's what happens in war"
 - ii. And then he brought Bathsheba into his house and claimed her as his own wife
 - 1. The self-centeredness of David's heart led to an icy COLDNESS of David's heart
- d. And this, of course, was Judas' story as well
 - i. You would think that, the more time one would have spent with Jesus, the more moved they would have been to repentance
 - 1. But that was not what happened to Judas
 - a. Like King David, Judas continued in his self-centeredness, and his heart eventually became COLD and UNCARING
 - i. We know that Judas was a thief, and so his self-centeredness came out in the form of greed
 - ii. But you also have to wonder if Judas was also consumed with power as well
 - 1. In Luke 21, Jesus is speaking of the end times to his disciples
 - a. He tells them of wars and famines and all sorts of natural disasters
 - b. And he also tells them, that in the midst of all that distress, they would be hated as well
 - 2. Everyone who would choose to follow after him would be delivered up to persecution
 - a. Their enemies would be abundant
 - b. Their distress would be great
 - iii. Now, for anyone who still had in their mind that Jesus was going to be political ruler who would re-establish the nation of Israel, and lead them in the fight against their Roman oppressors
 - 1. All of this that Jesus had just told them would be very UNWELCOME words
 - a. And so, after hearing all of this in chapter 21, at the beginning of chapter 22, we read that Satan finally entered into Judas' heart
 - i. And Judas went to the chief priests to finalize his betrayal
 - 2. I believe that Judas' self-centeredness didn't just revolve around his greed for more money

- a. I think he also hungered and thirsted after power
 - i. And when he realized that Jesus wasn't going to provide ANY of these things for him
 - 1. Judas' self-centered heart became a COLD and an UNCARING heart
 - 2. Satan himself entered into Judas' heart
 - a. And, for thirty pieces of silver, Judas betrayed the Son of God
 - 3. Friends, this is the inevitable consequence of one who continues in a heart of self-centeredness
 - a. Eventually, that self-centered heart will become a COLD heart
 - i. But there IS a third option!
 - ii. We talked last week about an implied "if only" in the story of the younger son
 - 1. IF ONLY the son would have continued to abide in the house of his father, then he would have never had to walk through the self-inflicted pain and turmoil in the far country
 - a. Well, in the same way, I believe there is also an implied "IF ONLY" in the story of the older son as well
 - i. And that leads us to our final type of heart...
- 5. IF ONLY, the older brother would have chosen to have a heart of GLADNESS
 - a. This is what the father is trying to tell the older brother...
 - i. "Son, IF ONLY you would see all that you have RIGHT NOW, in MY house...
 - ii. IF ONLY you would see all the painful things that your younger brother had to go through to learn humility and repentance...
 - iii. IF ONLY you would see that his return is cause for GREAT rejoicing...
 - 1. IF ONLY you would see all of these things, your heart would be GLAD!"
 - b. Just think about Judas' story
 - i. Now, the Bible is clear, God's sovereign plan was unfolding through the self-centeredness and coldness of Judas' heart
 - 1. In Acts chapter 2, Peter says unequivocally that Jesus was delivered up "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God"
 - 2. In John chapter 17, Jesus freely acknowledges that he has guarded the hearts of all of the disciples...
 - a. EXCEPT for the heart of Judas, the son of destruction
 - i. Jesus ALLWOED Satan to enter into Judas' heart, in order that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, and God's plan of redemption would be accomplished
 - 3. But none of that means that Judas WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE for his actions
 - a. This is clear by his reaction to Jesus' trial in Matthew 27, when Matthew says that Judas CHANGED HIS MIND and tried to undo his betrayal
 - i. He knew exactly what he had done
 - ii. And his heart that was once consumed with self-centeredness...
 - 1. His heart that had become COLD and UNCARING toward Christ...
 - a. It was now run through with grief
 - 4. Sadly, however, this was just a worldly grief
 - a. The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 7:10, that
 - i. ¹⁰GODLY grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

1. Judas only had a worldly grief
 - a. This worldly grief produced only death, as he hung himself upon a tree
 - i. If only...
- ii. IF ONLY, Judas would have had GODLY grief, as David finally did when he was confronted over his sin
 1. In 2 Samuel 12, God again sends the prophet Nathan to speak to King David
 - a. But this time, his message is filled with REBUKE
 - i. God says to David,
 1. "I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives and all the house of Israel and Judah. And I was willing to give you SO MUCH MORE.
 - a. So why did you despise MY words, and do what is evil in MY sight?"
 - b. Like the father in Jesus' Parable, God the Father spoke to David, and he said to him,
 - i. "Son, didn't you realize that ALL that is mine is YOURS?"
 1. But actions have consequences
 - a. And as a result of David's self-centered affair with Bathsheba...
 - b. As a result of his cold-hearted decision to have Uriah murdered
 - i. God demanded the life of the illegitimate son that was born to David and Bathsheba
 - iii. But then an incredible thing happens
 1. After the little boy's life is taken, and David's time of mourning ends
 - a. David gets up... he washes his face and eats some food
 2. And at some point in the midst of all of this, David writes Psalm 51
 - a. And this Psalm is FULL of GODLY grief
 - iv. We don't have time this morning to go deeply into this Psalm, but all throughout the Psalm David is pleading for the mercy and grace of God
 1. He recognizes that he is 100% guilty of his transgressions
 2. He confesses that his sin of self-centeredness and the sinfulness of his cold heart are EVIL in the eyes of the Lord
 3. And his only hope to be made clean from all of these sins is if God CHOOSES to show mercy...
 - a. If God CHOOSES to show grace...
 - b. If God CHOOSES to create in him a clean heart and a right spirit
 - v. And then David prays these amazing words...
 1. *¹¹Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.*
 - c. My friends, here lies the lesson of the older son in Jesus' Parable...
 - i. Every single one of us, especially those of us who have walked with the Lord for a lengthy season of time...
 1. We are all susceptible to becoming self-centered and entitled in our Father's house
 - a. "God, I have served you faithfully and obediently for MANY years... why haven't you given me..."

- i. And then fill in the blank with all the things you think you are entitled to
 - 1. And if we continue in our self-centeredness...
 - 2. If we continue in our sense of entitlement...
 - a. Then our hearts will eventually become COLD and UNCARING toward the world around us
 - b. This is Jesus' great warning of Matthew 24, that *"as lawlessness begins to increase in the world, the love of many will grow COLD. But the one who endures to the end will be SAVED."*
 - i. The one whose heart DOES NOT continue in self-centeredness
 - ii. The one whose heart DOES NOT grow cold
 - c. But rather, the one who experiences a GODLY grief that produces repentance that leads to SALVATION
- 2. And, like David, the one whose heart is RESTORED with the JOY of their salvation
 - a. Will then turn, and teach transgressors the way of the Lord
 - i. Just like Jesus did with the tax collectors and the sinners
 - 1. With mercy
 - 2. With grace
 - 3. With compassion
- d. Brothers and sisters in Christ, if you have lost the gladness of God within your heart in these days, then perhaps it is because you have allowed your heart to become cold
 - i. May the Lord restore to us the JOY of OUR salvation
 - ii. May the Father remind us of the gladness of all those who dwell within His house