



## The Father Heart Of God | Bursting With Love | Luke 15:11-31

1. Which parable is your favourite? Explain why. A parable is a small story with a big message. What's the big message in your favourite parable? Is it your favourite because it speaks into a theme which you struggle with or are passionate about?
2. Do you find it easy to relate to God as 'Father'? Why? Why not? Sensitively share your experiences of being fathered/parented (or not) by earthly fathers. How has your experience affected how you relate to God as Father?
3. As you read the story of The Prodigal Son, what strikes you most about the three main characters: (1) the father; (2) the son, and (3) the older brother? Who do each of the characters represent in Jesus' day, and who might they represent in contemporary times?
4. Jesus explains why he is telling the parable in Luke 15:1-3. Discuss how you expect the Pharisees and teachers of the law might have been responding at different points (chosen by you) in the story.
5. How does the father express his grace and compassion in the story? In what ways have you experienced the grace and compassion of God at different stages in your faith journey?
6. Are you 'a sinner' or 'a saint'? 'Heir' or 'slave'? 'Adopted child' or 'orphan'? How are these descriptors problematic?
7. Reflect upon the words of Romans 5:8 as you read the son's rehearsed speech in verse 18-19, compared to what he delivers in verse 21. What's going on in the son's world here?
8. Verse 20 contains the word 'compassion' which we've heard numerous times during the past few weeks. What, do you think, is God wanting to say to us individually and as a church about this theme?
9. The older brother is a significant twist in Jesus' tale. What do you make of the idea that it's possible to be 'lost' even if a person has been slavishly/religiously obedient? Consider the response of the Pharisees with this regard.
10. Jesus leaves the parable open ended. "Does the older son repent and join the celebration?" Can you think of an occasion when you've frowned upon God's grace towards someone when you didn't think they deserved it? Did you join the celebration or vent?