



March 27, 2022

Sermon Series

Full to the Brim

Lenten Introduction: *The scriptures for this Lenten season are filled with parables and promises of God's abundant and expansive grace. Jesus as a mother hen, a prodigal son welcomed home, a fig tree nurtured with care and hope, precious oil poured out lovingly and freely, stones shouting out with praise —these sacred texts are brimming with a Gospel of grace. We've done nothing to deserve or earn this grace, and yet, like water, it spills over. Full to the Brim is an invitation—into a radically different Lent, into a full life. It's an invitation to be authentically who you are, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, to pour out even more grace wherever it is needed. When we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, that love spills over. It reaches beyond ourselves; like water, it rushes and flows, touching everything in its path.*

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 NRSV

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³So he told them this parable: ^{11b}"There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Bible Conversation

What is the parable about?

Who are you in the story? The brother who did what was expected? The father? The son who went away?

Did you notice that verse three says, "Then Jesus told them this parable:" then the lectionary suggestion skips two entire parables? Why? What is missed when we skip so much of the conversation?

Reflection by Pastor Rob Zahn

Have you ever had to repeat yourself because someone didn't hear you? I was at Chipotle the other day for lunch. If you haven't been there, it is the kind of place where you order at a backwards buffet. You know...there is a buffet of items to put in a burrito or a burrito bowl or something like that. The 'backwards' part is that the employee dishes up the ingredients for you as you watch through a plexiglass barrier. The problem in the whole system is the plexiglass barrier, which is where my experience begins.

The person in front of me in line was quite short. When they approached the plexiglass to make an order, the employee couldn't hear them at all. The order had to be repeated four or five times before the employee finally understood. It was both funny, as well as a bit frustrating.

This seems to be what happened to Jesus in our text for today, except the people he was talking to could hear him fine. They likely just didn't understand. So, Jesus repeated himself.

In today's Big Idea, I am not so much giving you a devotional, but a task. The reason for this is because the story of the Prodigal Son is not a stand-alone story. It is the third of three stories that Jesus tells in succession. It is as if he keeps saying the same thing in slightly different ways, so that those he is talking with can hopefully understand.

If you would, read the whole chapter and look at the questions and see if anything new rises to the surface.

Reflection Conversation

What is repeated in all three stories that Jesus tells?

How might this broad reading of Luke 15 have changed your thoughts on the Prodigal Son? In what way?

The 1 Question:

All three of these stories seems to be about that which is lost (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son). What does Jesus mean by 'lost'? What is the metaphor getting at? What is lost for us?

Closing Prayer

God of Grace,
Help us to rejoice over others as you do. We know you are God of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. We also know that you are God of the whole of creation--all of it. Help us to stop dividing it like it is our inheritance and encourage us to celebrate unity despite our differences. You are a God of unity, completeness, and the whole and for that we give you thanks. Amen.

Next Week's Bible Theme and Text:

Sermon Series: Full to the Brim

Text: John 12:1-8

**1 week.
1 story.
1 message.**

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