HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 15 & 16

Main Point

Devotion results in being about the Father’s business

 Read Luke 2:49; Luke 15:1-10

**In Luke 2:49, Jesus, as a boy, is “lost” by His family travelling home from the Passover in Jerusalem. When Mary finds Him He is in the Temple teaching. Jesus says “Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s House?” The King James says “about My Father’s business”. Having read the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin, what is the Father’s business? What are some intentional ways that you are “about your Father’s business?”**

Both of these parables point to the finder’s joy. Jesus said there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than the many—the 99—who don’t need repentance. No one is so lost as those who fail to see their lostness. Jesus pointed out the need for His followers to diligently and intentionally pursue those who are without Christ and celebrate when people make Jesus Lord of their lives.

 Read Luke 15:11-32.

**Looking at the three parables in Luke 15 – the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son – what are some themes that these parables have in common? What do you think these themes tells about the Father’s business?**

Obviously, one of the themes is that something is lost. That is, for lack of a better phrase, the beginning state of each parable. Even the prodigal son is lost at the beginning of that parable, even though he is “in” the father’s house. His heart is lost to his father as evidenced by the request that he receive his inheritance before the father has died. There is also the theme of each of the lost “things” – sheep, coin, son – “belonging” to someone who is willing to search for it, to not give up until it is restored to its rightful relationship with its “owner”. The theme of celebration, joy, and rejoicing runs through each of these parables.

**Jot down some thoughts about these themes, and any others you may have found, and what they tell us about the “Father’s business”.**

 Read Luke 15:28.

**Focus on the response of the elder son for a few moments. What is the difference between his response and the response of the others in these parables when the lost thing is found? What do you think this says about who’s business the elder son was really about? What do you think it says about being in the “Father’s House” and being “about the Father’s business”?**

The elder son is the only one who responds with anger instead of joy in each of these parables. Yet, he was in the Father’s house the entire time. This should be a good illustration and reminder to us to remember that being the Father’s House doesn’t necessarily mean I am about the Father’s business. There is joy in the Father’s business, not bitterness and anger. Ponder this question, when you feel a lack of joy in being about the Father’s business, is it possible that you aren’t really about the Father’s business at all? Is it possible that you are merely about your business presented as the Father’s business? What can you do to guard your heart in serving and make it about the Father’s business?

 Read Luke 16:1-8

**How would you describe the actions of the steward in this story? How would you describe the response of the master to the steward’s actions?**

If we view Jesus’ telling of this story as an “endorsement” of the actions of the master or the steward, this is a hard story. If we view Jesus’ telling of this story as simile, a progression from a lesser truth to a greater truth, it seems to fit more with the “heart” of the Gospel. Consider the things that you find difficult in this story - maybe it’s the steward’s “swindling” of the master, maybe it’s the willingness of those who owed the master to participate in this swindling for selfish gain, maybe it is the master’s praise of the unrighteous steward – and try to reconcile them with what you know is the heart of the Gospel. Sometimes the most important verse to examine are the ones that are difficult to reconcile. Often times they lead us to a deeper understanding of scripture.

 Read Luke 16:8-10

**Focus in on the phrase “…for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.” What do you think Jesus is trying to tell us here? How does this phrase reframe the story of the unrighteous steward? How does it connect with verse 10?**

Jesus is stating that, as believers, we should be shrewd in the ways of Christ than the unbeliever is in the ways of the world. It is almost a lament that His people don’t understand His ways as well as those of the world understand its ways. We need to step our game up! We need to seek understanding of His ways, we need to utilize His ways, we need to be shrewd in His ways and we need to be zealous in His ways. How can you do that in your life?