

Luke 15:11-32 The Father's Forgiveness- A Story told in Chiasmic Form

11 And He said, "A man had two sons. 12 "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them.

The starting place: A Family broken by rebellion and desire. The inheritance is distributed to BOTH sons

13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 "And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

The character challenge of the younger son. How will he respond when his defiance and narcissism lead to bankruptcy and pain.

17 "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's **hired men** have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!

Realizes the care and integrity his father has, even in the care of his slaves. So the son claims nothing for himself and plans to be satisfied to be no more than a servant.

18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men." '

The sin is against HEAVEN, in the sight of the father. The son realized he is totally unworthy of his family of origin.

20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

Main thought of the Chiasm. The compassionate longing of the Father to be a united family connects with the previous two stories..

21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

The sin is repeated twice in the story. The father interrupts the rehearsed confession so it is not finished. That's part of the point of repeating it - to reveal the Father's intervention. Cutting off the son's rehearsed speech is part of the Father's excitement and zeal for his son.

22 "But the father said to **his slaves**, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

Instructions to the servants. The Father does not fulfill the son's wish to be one of the slaves, but tells the **slaves** to serve the Father and son.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 "And 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.' 28 "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, **who has devoured your wealth** with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'

The character challenge of the Older Son. Will he forgive a brother who wasted his portion of the family's estate?

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.' "

A family reunited by a rebellious son's humility and the Father's forgiveness. That's the Gospel of "the kingdom."