

Sunday, March 27, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
“Lost and Found”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In groups of two or three, respond to the following, “What is the most reckless thing you’ve ever done?”

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 Context. This week’s reading is usually known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But it is just as much, perhaps even more, a story about the father: the father is even more prodigal (excessive) in his love for his son than his son is with his spending. We could rename it the Parable of the Prodigal Father and his two Sons. In its context the story is aimed at those who consider themselves right with God and look down on those they judge to be sinners. The message here is one of the unlimited, unqualified, unconditional love of God for God’s children who turn back to God. This parable stands literally at the center of Luke’s account of Jesus’ journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

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

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Why does Jesus tell this parable? Who is the main audience?
- What does the word “prodigal” mean? [Many falsely assume it has to do with acceptance or returning. The word means “reckless.”]
- How is the younger son reckless? How is the older son reckless? How is the father reckless?
- Sometimes this story is told as if it is about returning. How is the story more about searching and finding? (Hint: Read verses 4-10 for further confirmation.)
- How are the older brother’s words self-incriminating? [The older brother notes that he has been working like a “slave.” He will not accept the brother as his brother, but rather, “this son of yours.” How does he know how the younger brother lived while away?

- What do you think happens next in the parable? Do you think the older son learns to accept the actions of the father? Do you think the older son leaves the father and the brother?
- Why do you think the parable ends open-ended?
- How might the Pharisees and scribes be like the older son? How might we be like the older son?
- What do we learn about God from this passage? What does this passage tell us about ourselves?
- How might this parable be calling us to live? What might this parable be calling us to do?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God, the Hound of Heaven, we thank you that you continue searching for us and that there is no land too distant for us to wander outside the reaches of your love. Help us to accept our identity as those who have been found by your love. May we learn to be as gracious to others as you have been to us. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.