

The Older Brother Problem: Why Good People Need Grace Too | Luke 15:25-32

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[0:00] All right, good morning, everyone. How are we? I hope your summer was good. Because we're now in autumn, right? The leaves will start falling off the trees this afternoon. You watch.

! So if you didn't get your sun last week, that's it for another year. If there's something that we like to complain about, it's the summer, isn't it? It's the weather. It's a British thing. All right, so Luke chapter 15, if you have a Bible.

We started this a few weeks ago. We're now in our, I think, our fifth sermon in this chapter, and next week we'll conclude. So this morning, we are looking at the story of the older son, all right? And so we're just going to read some just to kind of give you some context, and then we'll pray, and then we'll get into the text. So the story is verse 15, verse 1.

Now, the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him, that is Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. And so last time, or previous times, we've said there's two groups of people on display here. There's group one, the tax collectors and sinners, those people who knew that they were lost. And then group two, the Pharisees and the scribes, group two, who were convinced that they weren't lost. So they start grumbling about how Jesus receives the first group. And so then flick down to verse 11, as Jesus is giving one parable in four settings. So he says, there was a man who had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey to a far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose across the country, and he began to be in need.

[2:05] And so he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into the fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate. There was no egg eating going on, just to clarification. And no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself, he said, how many of my father's hired servants have more enough bread, but I perish here with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Treat me as one of your hired servants. And he arose and he came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced and kissed him. And the son said to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants quickly, bring the best robe, put it on him, bring a ring and put it on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring the fattened calf and kill it. And let us eat and celebrate. For this, my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And they began to celebrate. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said, your brother has come and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound. But he was angry and he refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him. But he answered his father, look, these many years I have served you. I have never disobeyed your command. Yet you never gave me even the young goat that I may celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him. And he said to him, son, you are always with me. And all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad for this. Your brother was dead and is alive and he was lost and is now found. Let's pray together.

Father, we open your word, Lord, and we, Lord, we want to make much of you this morning. Lord,

we want to see your beauty and your glory, your compassion, your love, your mercy for each and every one of us. And so, Lord, we ask that you would do a surgeon's work this morning. Lord, would you divide that which needs dividing? Lord, would you heal and mend that which needs healing and mending? Lord, would you convince us these things are true? Would you convict us that these things are true? Would you remind us,

Lord, of our place in you? Lord, help us to understand these things. Lord, we have been given brains by you to understand. Lord, we need your spirit to help us make these things come alive to us.

[5:02] Lord, and that's what we pray this morning. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So last week, we looked at the story of the youngest son. And just again, verse 11, there was a man who had two sons. And so there are two stories about each son. And we noticed that in verse 12, that when the youngest son went to the father and said, give me my inheritance, give me what is due to me, the father divided the property between both sons. And there's some acceptance on the part of the older son of this division of the estate. And the most obvious difference between the younger son and the older son is actually what happens next. The younger son, as we've just read, left home. He squandered all of the money and he ended up doing the most unthinkable thing that a Jewish boy could be doing. And that was working on a pig farm.

And so to the people listening, as this story is being given by Jesus, this younger son's lostness is super obvious. No one's having to explain it. No one's sitting there, the scribes and Pharisees down as they look distant and kind of confused and say, let me unpack it. This was completely obvious. His rebellion was visible. His sin was public. The younger son was lost.

And we've been going through these stories in this chapter. And as we've been doing that, we've been encouraged to think about what lostness means, because each lostness is presented differently.

And then we've been encouraged also to think about what is happening beneath the lostness. And so when we look to the story of the sheep, the sheep was suffering from a loss of belonging. It was distant from the flock. When we when we look to the story of the coin, that was suffering from a loss of value and purpose. And then last week, we said that the younger son was suffering from a loss of identity. And he was the son who no longer believed that he was the son.

[7:21] Right. Verse 19 says, as he says to his father, I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But now Jesus kind of turns the camera around. And the real shocking truth of Luke 15 is this. And it's that the younger son is not the main surprise.

The younger son, the fact that we've got this this young Jewish boy is run away from home, squandered his inheritance, living on a pig farm that and then is returning home.

And his dad goes, yeah, come in and kills the fattened calf and has a party. That's not the surprise. The oldest son is the surprise. The oldest son wasn't suffering from a loss of identity, but a loss of security.

He knew that he was a son, but he no longer believed that being a son was enough. Critical.

The younger son saw security in freedom and self-discovery. The oldest son saw security in obedience and achievement. One ran away from the father. One worked for the father.

[8:38] But neither rested in the father's love. The younger son needed grace. And guess what the oldest son needed? Grace. Different sins, same salvation.

And last week we saw something that I kind of geeked out on about. So, you know, I thought I'd just bring it back today. And that's called the inverted parallel outline that we talked about of the younger son.

And it's just coming on the screen just to remind you, just in case you had forgotten. Not that you would have done. Because I'm sure you memorized it, right? But last week we saw this inverted parallel outcome.

The story starts with death in verse 12 and ends in resurrection in verse 24. Then in section B starts in verse 13 where all is lost. And in verse 23, everything was restored to him.

In section C we saw in verse 15, rejection. And then in verse 20, acceptance. And the story builds to show us the real problem and a solution in verses 16 to 19.

[9:40] Where there, the younger son makes that declaration, I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. So, the story of the younger brother, the younger son, actually, you know, resolves quite nicely, quite neatly.

That really helps our brains, doesn't it? Like there's an ending to the story. Well, the story of the older son does the same thing, but with one radical difference. If you look at the next, it's called a chiasm.

Chuck it up there for me, thank you. So, we begin in verse 25 with the son standing at a distance in the fields.

And the real radical thing is the missing ending. And we'll talk about that as we go, right? The real radical difference is that section A doesn't conclude, it's missing.

Not missing from the text, missing from the story. Right? Then we get section B, where we go, you know, it starts with your brother.

[10:50] And we see peace. And we see a feast. And we see anger. That's verses 27 and 28. And that's resolved with your brother, again.

Is safe, there is feast. But instead of anger, there is joy. That's verse 32. And then in the middle. Oh, excuse me. Then we've got C, which is costly love in verse 28.

And then costly love in verse 31. And then in the middle, this is again the climax almost to the understanding the story. Just where the younger son said, I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.

He no longer believed he was a son. The older son believes he's a son. He just doesn't believe being a son is enough. And so right in the middle, he declares this complaint.

And this complaint is seen in my actions, my pay. I've done this. I deserve that. Now, none of us can relate to that. I know. Right? And then he goes, his actions, his pay.

[11:52] Well, what's the problem? Well, the problem is he's looking at his younger brother and going, look at what he's done. How can he be rewarded? Look at me. I should be rewarded. Right?

Big problem. Okay? Big problem. Why? Because most of us, some of us probably this is true, but most of us aren't the younger son. We haven't come from a younger son scenario.

I have. My background is younger son. Ask my parents. They're old because of me. Right? Well, that's what they'll tell you. I just think it's age.

But anyway, some other people come from this scenario. Look at my faithfulness. Look how I've served you all of these years.

I deserve something better. And so there's three things I want to highlight in this text that I think are just going to be helpful to us.

[12:52] And the first is to notice that the older son is lost in the field of duty. He is close to the house, but he is far from the heart.

Right? He's lost in the field of duty. So notice where Jesus places him in verse 25. Now his older son was where? In the field. Okay, he's not in a far country.

Right? He's certainly not in a pigsty. He is not in a place of famine. The older son is exactly, notice this, he's exactly where he's supposed to be as the older son.

He's in the field. He's working. He's serving. He's doing his duty. He's rocking up. He's putting chairs out. He never misses his road to slot. Not once. He doesn't need that weekly reminder that drops in your inbox.

Right? He's there already serving. Right? Yet by the end of the story, he's outside the feast.

[14:00] Like the younger son was geographically far away, but the older son is spiritually far away. One was lost through rebellion.

The other one was lost through religion. One broke all the rules. The other trusted the rules to save him. Look at verse 25.

His older brother was in the field and he came and he drew near to the house and he heard music and dancing. Now, if you know, if you're down the road and you can hear music and dancing, that party is epic.

Right? And so he's wandering down the street and he's hearing a little bit of whatever, Jewish drum and bass or whatever's going on. And he's like, what's going on? There's a party. I didn't get an invite.

Why is there a party going on in my town and I'm not invited? And so he called one of his servants, verse 26, and he asked what these things meant.

[15:02] And he said to him, your brother has come. It doesn't mean that he's returned. It means that he has arrived home.

There's a whole thing going on in the background there, which we don't really have time to unpack. But if you link has come to his father has received him, then you'll get that sense of that coming back.

He's not just decided, I'm going to go home because I want a cup of tea and I'm going to see him again next week. This is linked to, it says, your father has come and your father, or your brother has come and your father has killed the fattened calf.

Why? Because he has received him. This is more than just the younger brother going home. It's the complete act of reconciliation.

It's not just that he's come home. It's that he's been received. That's the phrase. And he's received back safe and sound, which is the idea of, in the Old Testament, we would call it shalom, peace.

[16:09] It's everything to do with wellness, prosperity, peace, right relationship. It's restoration. So the younger son comes home and in an instant, things are set right.

Sounds like salvation, doesn't it? Right? In an instant, things are good with the father. The father doesn't place him on probation.

There's no indication to us that the father is going, well, we'll see. We'll see if this lasts. There's no demand for repayment.

It doesn't require him to earn his way back into the family. Nothing remains unsolved. The relationship that the son thought was lost forever is fully restored by the grace of the father.

He doesn't return as a hired worker like he thought he might want to or have to. He returns as a beloved son welcomed home. And because of that, the older son is furious.

[17:23] Here's the second thing to note. He's not only lost in the field of duty, but he is lost in the refusal of joy. He is standing outside while grace goes in.

Verse 28 says, he was angry and he refused to go in.

It's just like he sat on the pavement outside and he's like, I shall not. I am so angry. You know, like a toddler. I will not do that.

That's how he's acting. He doesn't just hesitate and pause. The text is explicit. He refuses to go in. That's a devastating detail, isn't it?

Because all of his life, this boy had been the faithful son. The one who stayed when I was left. He is the insider. He's the one in the field.

[18:24] He's the one who kept going when the younger brother walked away. And yet now something had shifted. Because the one who thought he was secure and his place was guaranteed now stands outside.

Not because he was excluded, but because he's refused to enter. And the tragedy is not that the father shuts the door.

The tragedy is that the older son will not walk through it. And in that moment, the great reversal to the scribes and Pharisees becomes visible. The apparent insider has become the outsider.

The one who stood closest to the father's house now stands furthest from the father's heart. He has not been pushed out by the father's rejection.

He has stepped out by his refusal of joy. And all the while, the feast continues inside. Like, grace is not waiting.

[19:28] The party hasn't stopped because older brother has returned. Grace is already being celebrated, but he will not go in. Which teaches us that insiders with God's story can become outsiders to God's mercy.

The house is still full. The music is still playing. The father is still rejoicing. But the older brother is standing on the outside. And there has to be, doesn't there, a daily decision to choose joy.

I'm going to choose joy. Thirdly, would you notice that he is not only lost in the field of duty.

He is not only lost in the refusal of joy, but he's also lost in the logic of merit. Serving the father and missing the sonship. He's lost in the logic of merit.

Notice what he says to his father in verse 29. He says, look. Now, if I'd said that to my father, I'd be in so much trouble. He doesn't say, father.

[20:39] Let me explain something. How I'm feeling. He doesn't say that at all, does he? He says, look. Now, you look here. He's frustrated. He's angry. There's a party going on.

He has an invite, but he's refused it. And this is how he's relating to his father. Look, these many years I have served you.

I have never disobeyed your commandment. Listen carefully. He doesn't say, father, I love you. He doesn't say, I'm grateful to be your son.

He doesn't say, I'm glad my brother is alive. Instead, he speaks the language of performance.

Notice those words. Years, service, obedience, achievement, merit.

That's his language. In previous sessions, we've mentioned that the pattern that seems to run through the Bible about two sons.

[21 : 43] And it seems like Jesus, as he has done in other stories, and these stories in particular in Luke 15, is simply retelling Old Testament stories. Because again and again, the Bible tells stories of two sons.

And again, to refresh your memory, you have Cain and Abel. You have Ishmael and Isaac. You have Esau and Jacob. You have Joseph and his brothers and David and his brothers. And again and again, God overturns human expectations.

The older brother or the older is expected to inherit. And the younger receives grace. The older expects recognition.

And the younger receives mercy. The older expects reward. And the younger receives blessing.

And every time God does this, someone then struggles with the idea of grace.

Because grace disrupts merit. Grace overturns entitlement. And it refuses to operate according to our own human calculations.

[22 : 44] It disrupts the logic. The Pharisees listening to Jesus would have recognized this pattern immediately. They believed that they were the faithful older brother.

They kept the law. They were the protectors of righteousness. They were the guardians of the covenant. And now Jesus is saying, look, the problem is not that you are the older brother.

The problem is that you have become lost just like him. And so we might ask the question, well, how have they become lost?

How did the Pharisees and the scribes get to this place? How did you get from one day worshipping in the very presence, in the very temple of God in Jerusalem, to now standing outside the feast?

Well, again, the Pharisees and the Pharisees and the Pharisees and the scribes might recall that this is actually a common pattern in their own history. Whenever God's people strayed or whenever they were taken captive, God repeatedly preserves a faithful group of people, right?

[24 : 03] We call them the remnant. So when you read your Old Testament and you read Isaiah or Jeremiah or Daniel or Ezra or Malachi, these are people who remained loyal while others wandered.

People who genuinely loved God. People who genuinely tried to obey God. But it wasn't too long before a very real danger kind of emerged and actually emerged repeatedly.

The remnant begins to define itself by comparison. And if you read those books, you read the comparison. We stayed.

They left. We were taken. We stayed faithful. We obeyed. They rebelled. We deserve more. And that's exactly the older brother's logic.

His security depended on being different from his brother. But when his brother is welcomed anyway, the foundation of that security begins to crack.

[25 : 19] Another example. Think of Job. Don't think too long and hard about Job. But just think about Job. God calls Job blameless and upright.

Yet Job's suffering creates a crisis for him. And all the way through the book of Job, essentially you've got the same question. I have been faithful. What is happening?

I've been faithful. Why is God cursing me? That's essentially the question of Job. The issue is not arrogance. The issue is expectation.

Surely if I've been faithful, I deserve this. Faithfulness naturally creates expectation. We expect reward.

The older brother has exactly the same crisis. His years of obedience have created expectation. And now grace appears to ignore them. The father throws a feast, essentially, in his mind, for the wrong son.

[26 : 24] And suddenly the older brother panics. Because if grace is really this free, what happens to everything that he's built his life on?

The rich young ruler was another who had this kind of panic. Do you remember him? He said to Jesus, Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.

Like I deserve eternal life. Why? Because I've kept all of those things. His confidence was in his obedience. Which means that his security was not in God.

His security is in the record of faithfulness. The older brother is not secure in being loved. He is secure in being good.

And when goodness is no longer enough to distinguish him from his reckless younger brother, he becomes angry. Look, perhaps the closest, and you'll recognize this, the closest Old Testament parallel to the older brother is the prophet Jonah.

[27 : 29] Do you remember him? A guy who was swallowed by a big fish? You know the story. But Jonah obeys God's call. And he goes to preach in the city of Nineveh.

And much to Jonah's horror, the Ninevites actually turn and serve God. And Jonah is furious.

Right? Why is he furious? Well, he's furious for the same reason the older brother is furious. Grace has gone to the wrong people. And this is exposed in Jonah chapter 4, right?

Where you find him and he's sitting where? He's sitting on a field outside the city on a hill. Right?

And much like the older brother, he's outside the feast.

The party's going on in Nineveh. And he's not in it. Everybody's joyful. He's not. And he starts to get angry. And do you remember? It's hilarious. It's like a comedy.

[28 : 30] He gets angry at a plant. He gets angry at a worm. He gets angry at the wind. It's like, don't blow on me! He's just sitting on the side of the curb. And going, I refuse to go in.

And he says this. In Jonah chapter 4, verse 2. He says this. He says, Oh Lord, is this not what I said when I was yet in my country?

He says, it's like, I told you this would happen. This is terrible news. I know that you're a gracious God. And merciful. Slow to anger. And abounding in steadfast love.

And relenting from disaster. I knew you would forgive them. This is terrible. But what's he upset about? Well, he's upset about the fact that God's grace is going to the least deserving.

What was the older son upset about? The same thing. Right? Verse 28. These many years I have served you.

[29 : 32] What the older son didn't realize was that the worst news in the world. And listen carefully. The worst news in the world is also the very best news in the world. Right?

Paul said in Acts chapter 17. He says that God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything. Have you got that underlined in your Bibles? God is not served by human hands as if he needs stuff.

For the self-sufficient. For the logic of merit. That is devastating. Because if God needs nothing.

Then you can't earn his favor. You can't negotiate for his affection. Or put him in your debt. His security was built on being the faithful, obedient son.

But if God's love cannot be earned. Then what does his faithfulness get him? Suddenly the foundation between his feet begins to crack.

[30 : 40] And the older brother in all of us asks the same question. If I can't earn his acceptance, what have I been working for? He says, these many years I have served you.

And notice he says, I never disobeyed your command. And all of us are coming like, really? He says, yet you never gave me a young goat.

We have all the things to ask for, but still. You never gave me a young goat that I may celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours, he's not even his brother anymore.

You notice that? He's this son of yours. When this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed with a fattened calf for him.

Now look, just a real simple point. But this is, I think it's quite a powerful point. Is that, remember earlier in the story of the younger son. Can anybody find reference to the younger son going to prostitutes?

[31 : 46] You can't, right? No? Right? Verse 13 just refers to reckless living. Right? He makes no mention of what that looks like. So question, how does the older son know anything about what the younger son has been doing since he's just come in from the field?

Well, he wouldn't. So why the remark? Well, simply because he wants to poison the father's joy and damage the restored relationship. Can I say churches are not immune to this?

Christians aren't immune to this. Before we sit there and go, how dare you? Like, our own hearts are not immune to this. You know, where there is hurt for whatever reason, maybe jealousy has sprung up, resentment or pride takes root.

People can begin to make assumptions and exaggerate motives or repeat stories. They cannot possibly know a truth.

And the goal is often the same. And you'll notice if you've ever worked in an office. You know this is true. If I cannot control the situation, perhaps I can control how people perceive the situation.

[33:13] And so this older son is actually laying on the line for the father. He doesn't know anything that's happened.

He's making assumptions. He's, in essence, slandering his brother's name in front of the father. Why? So that he controlled our situation. Look at something else with me back in verse 29.

He says, look, these many years I have served you, underline the word, I have never disobeyed your command. Yet you never gave me a young goat that I may celebrate with my friends.

And like some of us, the younger brother, want to present his lists of nevers before God. Right? I have never, I have never, I have never, I have never, I have never, I have never disobeyed.

And you didn't even give me one measly goat. It's almost like he's keeping a heavenly spreadsheet. Column A, things I've done. Column B, things God apparently owes me.

[34:20] And some of us, unfortunately, we do exactly the same thing. Lord, I've never missed church. I did what they want me to do.

I never went off the rails. But, column B, you never gave me a promotion at work. You never fixed my problems. You never answered my prayers.

You see how quickly we jump? God, I've been faithful. Really? My prayers? They should have been answered by now. And we arrive before God carrying our list of nevers.

As though we're presenting evidence in court. Exhibit A, your honour. Decades of faithful service.

And the older brother's tragedy is that he's grieving what he never received while completely overlooking what he already has.

Did you notice? Did you notice? He's standing in the presence of the father. And he's surrounded by the riches of the family.

[35:34] And yet his eyes are fixed on one single missing goat. And he's so consumed by what he thinks has been withheld from him.

That he no longer sees what he's been freely given. He's so focused on what he didn't receive. He's forgotten what he already has.

And while he wants to talk about his nevers. Get this. If this is you. If you're a never person. Right?

While he wants to talk about his nevers. Would you notice what the father wants to talk about?

In verse 31. He said to him, son, you are always. With me. And all that is mine is yours.

So that's the unbelievable response from the father. The older son refuses to even address him as father. And yet the father turns and calls him his son. And again, the younger son didn't believe he was a son.

[36:43] The older son knew he was a son. But he no longer believed that being a son was enough. And so he says, son. And literally, it's a different Greek word for what we'd normally use as son.

It literally means child of mine. There's depth to that, isn't there? You're not just son biologically.

You are a child of mine. You are always with me.

Don't bring your nevers to me. Let me bring my always's to you. He says, verse 32. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad. Like, how could it occur to anyone otherwise?

What would be the other conclusion that you might want to draw, older son? For this your brother, as opposed to this son of yours. This your brother.

He was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found. And so now, let's address the missing thing. We go back to the outline.

[37:43] I don't know whether we can. But if we go back to the outline, you'll see that there are seven sections. But the story begs for eight. The story ends strangely, doesn't it?

There's no party. There's no joying. Joyfulness. There's no, you know, going into the town with the sheep and saying, this is my sheep was lost, now it's found.

This is my coin is lost, now it's found. This is my younger son who was lost, now it's found. There's no older brother. He was lost to have a party. That's the missing part. There's no resolution.

There's no final answer. We never discover whether the older brother goes to the feast. It's one of those moments. Do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do.

And you have to tune in next week. Sorry for the cultural reference. Look, there's going to be a reason, of course, isn't there?

[38:47] In my mind, as you know, I like to kind of play this out. But Jesus has finished this story and he turns to the Pharisees and scribes and he just goes, what do you think, boys?

Because the missing ending is there because the ending depends on their response. And now it depends on ours. Will we remain outside counting our years of service?

Will we keep score? Will we compare ourselves with others? Will we insist on fairness? Or will we come inside and rejoice that grace has triumphed again?

Because in the end, the feast is not for good people. It's for found people. And the only people who can enter are those willing to admit that they need the same thing as everyone else.

And that's grace. The younger brother needed grace because he had failed. And the older brother needed grace because he thought he had succeeded.

[40:06] And Jesus leaves the door open. Not just for sinners. Not just for Pharisees. But for anyone willing to lay down their record.

Their achievement. Their logic of merit. And come home to the Father and enter in. Let's spend a few moments with our heads bowed.

And Joan and Jenny are going to come back up and lead us in a song or two. It would be just good to spend a few moments just thinking prayerfully. Meditating.

Considering. The parts of our lives. Where we are prone to be the older son. So Father, we come before you with hearts open.

To be instructed by you. Would you cast your illumination on the parts of our lives.

[41:12] Where we are prone to come to you with our list of achievements. And our list of nevers. Expecting some kind of reward.

And Father, we are so grateful that you are a giver of good things. Lord, we are so blessed to know that you are a giving and good God.

But we also know the fragility of coming before you with our lists. Expecting. Blessing.

And honor. And position. And neglected to enter in the joy of our salvation. Neglected to be present with the Father.

To not be joyful at the way grace works. And so we ask this morning that you would forgive us of the older brothers in us.

[42:23] Lord, help us today to decide joy. Because of grace. And this morning, whether we feel like we're more like a wandering sheep away from the flock.

Or a coin that's lost our value. Or a younger brother that's in rebellion. Or an older brother that's living in the field of duty.

Lord, we come to you again open-handed. Nothing to bring. I say again, Lord, thank you for saving us. Thank you for restoring our relationship with you completely.

Not based on what we can do or have done. But based on what Jesus has done on the cross.

Thank you that you took all of our shame.

And our rebellion. And our brokenness. Our lostness. And you put it on the cross. And you died for them.

[43:28] And you went to the tomb. And you left them there. And our ability to stand in God's presence today.

Is based on your merit. And your success. And your achievement. And not us. Lord, we thank you that you're a God who doesn't need anything from us.

Lord, we can't put you in debt. Lord, thank you that we come before you. Whether we recognize in us more sheep than coins.

And younger brothers and older brothers. We can come. And so we do. Lord, would you remind us again of our place in you.

Lord, if we have confessed our sins before you. And repented of our ways. Lord, you have said that we are stood today in the heavenly places. Seated. Lord, thank you for that truth.

[44:35] Lord, may that be enough. Lord, may we believe, Lord, that in opposition to what the older son believed. That he had to have that stuff.

And then add stuff to it. Lord, we pray. Lord, that we would be not just happy. Not just blessed. But joyful. That we are called sons and daughters of the living God.

Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.