**Going deeper in Luke 15:11-31**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus tells three stories about being lost and being found. He is describing what God is like and what the kingdom of heaven is like. This is the third story of lostness.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.*

11 “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger son said to his father, ‘Father give to me my part of the estate.’ So he divided the property between them. 13 Not long after that, the younger son packed all his stuff and left for a distant country and wasted all his estate in reckless living. 14 After he had spent it all, there was a severe famine in that land and he began to be in want. 15 So he went and hired himself out to someone in that land who sent him into the fields to feed pigs. 16 He was so hungry that he really wanted to fill his stomach with the pods the pigs ate, but no one would give him anything. 17 When he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have enough food and some to spare and I am starving to death. 18 I am going back to my father and I will say to him: Father, I have sinned and God, I’ve sinned before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants.’ 20 He got up and went home to his father, but when he was a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for his son. He ran to him, embraced him and kissed him. 21 The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’ 22 But his father wasn’t listening. He called to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the prize-winning calf and slaughter it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this is my son who I gave up for dead and he is alive; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. 25 All this time the older brother was in the field. 26 So the older brother called one of the servants and asked what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come home and your father killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ 28 But he was angry and refused to go in so his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he said, ‘Look! These many years I have been slaving for you and never disobeyed you, but you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came who consume your estate with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’ 31 His father said, ‘Son you are always with me and everything I have is yours. 32 It is important that we rejoice and celebrate because your brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. What do you think motivated the younger son to ask for his part of the estate?

2. How did the younger son lose his estate? Is there any doubt that it was just some bad luck? Why might that be important?

3. In agrarian society what would it mean to slaughter a calf before it matured? Why would that detail perhaps add to the older brother’s anger?

4. The older brother was in the field when the festivities started. What do you think he was doing in the field? How do you think that made the older brother feel?

5. What is the older brother’s reaction to the celebration? Does he come back in after his father speaks to him? What does that say about what anger can do to us?

6. Why do you think Jesus uses the image of a family to talk about those who are lost (far from God)? How should that impact our attitude toward those who are far from God?

7. In this election time who do you think the people in your life feel like? The older brother or younger brother? What will it mean to help one another to find the father’s way toward healing?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Give thanks for the blessings God has given to you.

\*Pray for those you have differed with during this election season.

\*Ask the Lord to show you how you can bring healing into lives of those you agree and those you disagree with.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road*

In this election many will feel like the younger brother and others like the older brother. Will you choose the father’s way helping to work for healing? Will you help others find that way?