

If you have your Bibles, grab them, Luke chapter 15. We will try to tackle the whole chapter tonight. In Luke chapter 15, what we're about to dive into, it is possibly one of the most famous chapters in all of the Bible because of the stories or parables that Jesus tells within this chapter. He rips off three of them in a row, a trilogy if you will, and they have become famous, even in the secular world. They know them outside of church walls. If you talk about returning home, people know what that means even if they have no church background. So, He's going to rip off the parable of the lost coin, the parable of the lost sheep and then the parable of the prodigal son. And He's going to do it just bam bam bam, right after another, no transition points, no application points at the end, and the entire key to Luke 15 is in the first two verses of Luke 15. And as you read these parables as they stand without an understanding of who's in the crowd that day, you will lose the weight of what's going on. And so, we'll spend a majority of our time tonight trying to really break down these first two verses. Because we've really lost the weight of these two verses because of historical, cultural contextualization as well as some really bad children's songs.

So, let's just get after it, and you'll know what I mean. Luke 15:1, "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him." This is one of those verses that gets completely lost within the cultural context of the text. And so, what ends up happening is the real weight and hatred behind it gets missed upon us because we've been told that a tax collector was someone who stole money from the Jews. Isn't that correct? "Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see." And the reason that Zacchaeus was so despised is because he was given permission to raise or gather taxes for Rome, and they would say, "Gather \$30," and instead of gathering \$30, he gathered \$50. Is that correct? That's what everyone in this room, if you have any church background has been told about what a tax collector was. The truth is however, it goes well beyond thievery. At the time that Jesus is walking on the earth, at the time that the gospel of Luke is written, Israel is ruled by Rome. In fact, Rome, at this time, rules from England to India. Try to get your head around how massive of an empire that was. And although there are some HBO series out right now and some movies out right now that make Rome out to be very sexy, in the end, they were a ruthless, ruthless, ruthless empire that conquered the world by slaughtering hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. And if you want to get outside of Christianity and just head down to the library, you can read about the ruthlessness by which Rome ruled the world. They would walk into a city, build a statue of Caesar, who was supposed to be god...The funny thing about calling a man god, whether it was the Chinese, whether it was the Romans, is they just keep dying. But that's neither here nor there. Now, they would call Caesar, god, and say, "Bow down and worship." Now, if you would not worship Caesar, then they would just slaughter the town. There are historical accounts of cities having anywhere from 30 to 40 thousand men, women and children crucified outside of the city. I mean, can you get your mind around 35 to 40 thousand men, women and children being impaled or nailed to crosses outside of the city walls just to remind people of the power of Rome? They were ruthless, violent, unbelievably pagan men and women who ruled the world at this point. Now, I want you to walk with me here. How do you police a landmass from England to India without quick strikabililty?

Like, here's what I mean. In the world today, let's say in the United States, also a massive piece of land, let's say down in Texas, we think we should be our own country, the Republic of. Now, if we try that and I don't know how much you know about history, but when you try to secede from the Union, it just goes bad. It's not going to take nine months for troops to march from Washington D.C. by foot down to Texas. They're going to press a button, they're going to send some helicopters, they're going to send some planes. In a matter of moments, the rednecks that think we should be

our own state will be destroyed. Now, that's how it works in the modern world. In the 1st Century world, it's not that easy. So for Rome to rule ruthlessly like this, they had to have a massive, massive, massive army. How do you fund a massive, massive, massive army? Taxes. In the 1st Century, tax collectors were Jews who paid Rome for the right to gather taxes. At this time in history, the best bet is that almost 90% of a household income went to taxes. And we think we've got it bad now. 90% went to fund these massive armies of Rome. So to the Jews who believed that God commanded that they would a nation, who were a proud people, who believed they were called by God to be a light unto the world, for a Jewish man to purchase the right to tax them in order to pay for their very oppressors to continue to oppress and kill them, was unforgivable. Now, I have racked my brain for two weeks. There is no modern day equivalent. There is no modern day equivalent, where a family member of yours, where an American would betray all of us and begin to gather money for a force that was a foreign force that was killing our wives and our husbands and children, not quickly but would torture them for days on end until they died. There is nothing in modern times, in our westernized mind that can even comprehend this scenario. So now with this information, do you understand why the crowd grumbles when Jesus walks through them up to the sycamore tree and says "Zacchaeus, you come down?" Do you understand why they gasped at this? Why they were enraged at this? "This man who's raising funds to keep us oppressed, to slaughter..." Can you imagine the religious man in the crowd who had seen his sister and her husband and her family slaughtered two towns over by Rome, who knew that it occurred because this man was raising funds for the army? Now, do you understand why the crowd is furious with Jesus who says, "Zacchaeus, for I'm going to your house today." This goes well beyond "You took \$20 more from me than you should have." This goes well beyond "These taxes are unbearable." This goes well beyond money.

So, the first group that's there are tax collectors, but the second group that's there are sinners. Now once again, what happens to you and I within the cultural context of the time, is we miss out on it as we read it because we've been told that everybody's a sinner, we're all sinners. And so, this is you know, these people either drink too much or they go to the club too much or they'll skip the 7:00 service tonight to watch the Cowboys game. It's that kind of thing. We've just kind of said, "No, everybody's a sinner. We're all sinners." But in the 1st Century when this is written, sinners were not everyone. Sinners were a class of people. Like, in the United States of America, there's not much of a class system anymore. We'll just define it as tax brackets. I mean, there's not so much a class anymore where a guy could be born poor and he was just stuck there. He can't ever be anything but poor. So, it's hard for us to get this in our mind. Has anyone in here ever traveled to India? In India, they have a caste system, which means if you're born a beggar, you're a beggar. I mean, there ain't no college, there ain't no high school, you're done. You're a beggar, which is why, if you've been there, it's hard to recover from, because when two beggars get together and have a child and that child is born healthy, they will maim that child. They will rip out it's face, they will gouge it's eyes, they will break the baby's back and they will deform the baby, because in being deformed, it will be a more effective beggar. It's to survive. So, a sinner in the 1st Century wasn't everybody, but it was a class of people, specifically those who had jobs that were considered questionable or immoral. So, slave traders, prostitutes. I don't know that we have any really Scriptural/historical background on this, but let's say if Jerusalem had a strip club, the strippers that were there, that would have been considered questionable. There was this group of people that, by virtue of what they did, were considered unclean and alienated from God. But then on top of that, not only were sinners who did questionable things, but also sinners were people with deformities or some kind of maladies that they were born with or if something had accidentally happened to them, deformed them. If you will remember the New Testament, I don't know how many of you are savvy in the New Testament, but the Pharisees ask Jesus, "Why is this man a cripple? Is it because of his sin or the sin of his parents?" And so, he was a sinner not because of action but rather because he was deformed or couldn't walk or was missing a limb. And so, sinners were a class of people defined by immorality or deformity.

So, let's go back to this first verse again and read it. "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him." Isn't this unbelievably interesting? Where the true gospel is, even the tax collectors will push close to hear.

Religion? Nah, people have a lot of intrinsic pride. They love religion. It can make much of them. But the gospel? Even the tax collectors will press close to hear the gospel. So, tax collectors and sinners. Can you even get your head around this crowd? There's got to be a smell there. There's got to be. I mean, you want to study history, specifically poor, deformed people? This would have had a smell to it. It would have been terrifying. We probably wouldn't have wanted to bring our children around it. The tax collectors and sinners drawing near to hear the Son of God.

But they're not the only ones in the crowd. We've got some other buddies in the crowd. Let's look at verse 2, "And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" Okay, so here's what's happening. Jesus is not only allowing the tax collectors and sinners close. Now, let's go back to historical context. Within the framework of 1st Century Judaism, tax collectors and sinners would have been allowed nowhere near the temple. They were, according to the religious rulers of the day, alienated from God and had no chance at hearing teaching or hearing the Scriptures read. None. So, Jesus not only receives them, but He eats with them. This is what we talked about already. He comes up to Zacchaeus and He says, "I'm going to eat at your house tonight. I want to eat at your house." So, the Pharisees and the scribes in the crowd begin to grumble, and their grumble is an accusation against Jesus. The accusation is, "Since Jesus receives sinners and eats with them, then Jesus himself is lawless and Jesus himself is unclean." Notice that they don't feel the need to explain this statement. They simply, for the benefit of the rest of the crowd that doesn't fit in with these two polar opposites that are being pointed out, are saying, "You've been to temple. Listen, Jesus receives sinners, and he eats with them." They are making the indictment that Christ Himself is like them, alienated from God, and therefore, whatever He says does not have to be listened to and obeyed because of His alienation from God (chuckle, Himself) because of who He associates with. So Jesus, hearing them make this accusation, responds with the trilogy. And by the time He's through with these three stories, you'll completely understand why they wanted Him dead.

Here we go. "So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?" So, here's what He's doing. The Pharisees and the scribes believed that the heart of God was separation and ritual purity. They believed it so much so that they were willing to let anybody else who was outside of ritual purity go by the wayside and just be damned. And they would have nothing to do with them for fear of becoming unclean themselves. Jesus steps in and says, "Shame on you. Who would let a lost sheep die? No, you pursue them." And with a story that everyone would comprehend, Jesus says, "God's ultimate goal is not just ritual purity and separatism, but rather finding what is lost, redeeming and repairing what is broken. He leaves the ninety-nine and pursues the one." The Pharisees would be like, "That one is dumb. They get whatever they deserve. They should have stayed within the fence lines." Jesus goes, "No, We, the Trinity - God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, a pursuer of those who wake up one day and say, 'How did I get here? What happened? Where am I? Can I ever get home?' A pursuer." Look at how He finishes the story. "And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing." Any time there's a parable, if you try to break down every little thing and make it something, I think you might get in some danger there, but I love to think...When Christ really became a reality to me at seventeen, I mean, that first three to five months, it just felt like I was on autopilot. Like all of a sudden, I'm not having to be trained to read the Scriptures. I just want to read the Bible, I just want to pray, I just want to know. I'm just gathering myself, people who I thought knew the Lord well and might teach me, talk to me. I think this is what's going on here when he finds the sheep and he puts it on his back and he carries it until he gets home. And then once he gets it home, he lays it down and celebrates. Let's finish reading this. "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'" So according to Jesus, God's goal is not separatism and ritual purity, but the finding of what was lost. And when He finds it and saves it and gets it home, there is a massive celebration. Now, if you want to understand why the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees absolutely hated Jesus, look at this next line. "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." There, I guarantee you,

knowing Jewish culture, there were men in that crowd that tore their clothes and vowed to kill Him. He just said, in front of all of them, that if one of these tax collectors repents, God will rejoice more in that man's repentance than in all their ritual purity. I mean, you don't think this infuriates them? You don't think that at this moment, there were those that spat on the ground and walked away? You don't think, at this moment, there was the idea hatched, "This man has to die?"

So then, Jesus just rolls out the next story. It's very Quentin Tarantino-ish. I mean, no transition point, no nothing. Just bam, next one. You're like, "What? Okay, I'm going to need some help." Just wait 'til the end of the movie, you'll know. Here we go, verse 8, "'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?'" Alright so, the word picture that we get here is a woman absolutely freaking out. Within the parable, the coin she lost is about one day's wages. So, it's a good amount of money, but nothing to rip your house up for. It's a good amount of money, but it's not like a life savings. It's not like she's like, "I lost one day's wages. How are we ever going to eat?" She's still got nine day's wages. This is not some catastrophic deal that's going to put her out on the street. But she loses the one coin, and what does she do? She lights a lamp, she grabs a broom, she takes the couch out into the front yard. She takes everything out of the attic. She has a garage sale. She does whatever she can to find the coin. And then, when she finds the coin...once again, this is a very similar story...she gathers all her friends together and celebrates the coin. And look at what He says next. Just in case any of the Pharisees and scribes are still hanging out, He wants to repeat Himself. "Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Do you see that the Pharisees, the scribes, the Sadducees, they were not interested in the repentance of sinners. "They were damned, alienated, they got what they deserved. We are ritualistically pure, we are upright before God, we have done all that is right. They have failed. Judge them." And God goes, "Judge them?!? I'm seeking them! I'm trying to find them. You were meant to be bristles in a lamp." And you'll find out in other parts of the story that He goes, "Instead, you have become an anchor."

Now, once again, no transition point. He just goes into the third story. This story is more lengthy and more detailed, specifically about the despair of lostness. You're going to find the despair of lostness in this story. He's going to describe both parties involved here very well. Verse 11, "And he said, "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 he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.'" Some of you will know exactly what I'm talking about here. Some of you will just have to trust me. Following Jesus can, at times, be very difficult because He will make you confront what is wicked inside of you where most of the world simply numbs their heart and their mind to the reality of the self-destructive tendencies inside themselves. Jesus will force the issue. So, when you stare at your wickedness and decide, instead of to let Jesus deal with it, to run from God, it will always feel like freedom at first. Now, when our boy goes to a far off land and is squandering his wealth on parties and prostitutes...if you're wondering where I get the prostitutes from, you'll find out later in the story...you think he's missing the father's house? Not at all. He's free. He's free from his father's rules, free from his father's land. Do you ever wonder why he went so far away? Men and women who begin to confront their sins, whether that be the sins of lust, whether that be the sins of anger, whether that be alcoholism, there will be this moment where it just feels easier to run, and it will always feel like freedom for a little while. But look at what happens next. Verse 14, "And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything." Okay, I'm going to be really honest with you. To refuse sonship to Jesus completely guarantees slavery to something else. Our boy here refused to be a son, with all the power, all the authority, all the love of the father and finds himself a slave. And listen, the crazy thing about it is what we decide to be a slave to. I'll do this since it's playoff time. I like sports. I really do. I'm not the anti-sport guy. I'm not the artsy "sports are for freaks," I'm not that guy. I like sports, but I'm blown away by men who know the entire roster of whatever their team is. They know the stats, where that kid went to college, where he might have even played

his high school ball, how many yards he rushed for as a 15 year old JV guy, his whole life, everything about him, what next year looks like, the schedule. And they can break down stats and statistics, but then in the same breath, will unpack for you how crazy/busy their lives are, too busy to creatively love their wives, too busy to unpack the love of Christ to their children, too busy for this, too busy for that. You're a slave to the doings of 18-24 year old boys. And I like sports. Well, I'm waning, because I've been an Aggie fan and that's just been destructive. It's just painful. Now in the same way, I have met men and women who completely sell their soul to their boss. And they're unhappy and frustrated with life, and they can't sync up with their families, they've got no time for their family, they've got not time for their wife, but they're making a lot of money. That's slavery, man. You've decided, with your sixty years, to forsake all that does matter for all that doesn't. It's slavery. People who refuse sonship become slaves. It's unavoidable. It will be drugs and alcohol, it will be your career, it will be sports, it will be music, it will be something that, in the end, is ridiculous, while all that matters burns up. You cannot say no to sonship and not walk into slavery. It's just the truth. I wish there was a way around it. There's not a way around it. I've tried.

Let's go. Verse 17, ""But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than 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.'"" I love a guy who will practice his speech before he gets there. "And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him 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.'" The father will not even acknowledge this statement. Notice the response of the father. He doesn't even go, "You're right. That was dumb. Give me the calf." That's not what happens here. He does not even acknowledge it. Verse 22, "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring 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, what do you think is happening in that crowd of tax collectors and prostitutes and slave traders and strippers and the maimed? What do you think they're doing as this story's being unpacked? Because before, it's a coin and it's a sheep. It's children's stuff. But now, it was a man who wasted what was given to him. They're Jews. Follow me here, they're Jews, they're God's chosen, they're His children. They took it and they ran. And now He's going, "They came home and the father embraced them. They began to lament, He wouldn't even address it. He put on a ring, a robe and started some steaks on the grill."

And if the story stopped there, it would be so great, but it keeps going, and it really gets pathetic. Like, what happens next is just really, really pathetic. I'll let you look at it. Verse 25, "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." Religious people never want to talk to the Father. "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.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him," So, there is this epic celebration coming. The older son is out in the field, he begins to walk in from the field and he notices before he even gets to the house but he can hear not only music but dancing. I don't know how you can hear dancing, maybe like the electric slide. I don't know what's going on in there, but he can hear it. He can hear the dancing and the partying. This celebration is epic: fatted calf, wine flowing, all the servants invited. He is blowing up the area with this unbelievable celebration and this older son comes in, peers in, asks what's going on, in infuriated and is pouting outside, refusing to go in. The father does not go out and through gritted teeth go, "If you don't get in that house, I swear to you, I will snatch the life out of you." That's not what he does. The Scripture says that he entreats him. Is this not what Jesus is currently doing in the story? Is not the entreating that the father does to the older son exactly what's occurring in Luke 15 when Jesus is telling the story to the older brother? It absolutely is. Look at the response of the older brother, which points out the pathologicalness of religion. And I mean that not in the Jonathan Edwards good way but in the modern bad way. Verse 28, "But he was angry and refused to go in. His

father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.'" What?!? In the other room, there's this epic celebration. I mean, it's monstrous. There's steak and there's wine, like a good cab, like 88 B.C. I mean, he's blowing the thing up, and the older brother goes, "You never gave me a goat." You're like, "You want goat? In the other room, I've invited the entire area to come in and celebrate with the best food and the best wine with the best musicians, and what you want is a goat so that you and your buddies can go celebrate fact that you just worked in the fields like I commanded? Are you serious? You want a goat? So in this other room, the best of everything awaits: the greatest adventure, the greatest of passions, the greatest of wine, the greatest of food, the greatest of music, the greatest of dancing. In this room, all of this awaits, and you want to goat? You want a goat? Seriously? A goat? I'm sorry, this music's loud. Did you say a goat? Because maybe if you said 'boat,'" I was like, 'Well, a boat's bigger.' Are you saying 'goat?' This is what you want? Seriously?" Let's keep going. "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.' How big is that? Like they killed the fatted calf, right? But it was already the older brother's fatted calf. The wine that they're drinking is from the vineyards that the older brother owned. Let's keep going. "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; he was lost, and is found!'"

I'm hoping tonight that you begin to understand the New Testament now, specifically the gospels. I mean, do you want to know why the woman walks into the room and finds Jesus and falls at His feet and cries on them and takes her hair down and wipes them? Do you know why she's doing that? Because until this point, she's alienated from God, exorcised from the church, she has no hope of salvation, no hope of restoration, no hope of repentance, and yet here's Jesus saying, "The prodigal. The prodigal is why I came." Do you know why that woman comes out and breaks open that bottle of perfume and pours it on His feet? Do you understand why Zacchaeus presses in to hear Him. If you don't understand why the religious elite were so infuriated with Him, here it is, Luke 15. He's saying to them, "This epic celebration, this party, the thing I'm doing with tax collectors and sinners, they're a precursor of what's to come. I'm doing now what will be done on the final day. I'm doing now as an example of what the gospel is. I'm doing now what will be the gospel from this moment on. Come, eat and break bread."

So, here's the thing about this text. Do you notice that there's no application points? Like at other points, Jesus will tell parables and then He'll go, "Go and do likewise." Or Paul will preach and then he'll say, "As I do these things, do these things." But there's no point of application in Luke 15. In fact, at this moment, what's going to happen next is Jesus is going to turn away from the crowd. He's just going to gather his disciples and tell another story. That's not a part of the trilogy though. So, what's my hope here tonight? Because I've got no "go and do likewise" for you. It's not in there. I could always add application in, "Here's what this means for the current..." but I don't know if that's what we need from Luke 15. Here's what I mean. The way that men and women view Jesus...if you're not a believer in Christ tonight, then just see Him for who He is. If you're not a believer in Jesus, just listen and I hope the Holy Spirit does something here. But if you are a believer, here's the thing. The way people see Jesus determines the outworking of Jesus in their lives. The way they see Him pours out into how they see other people, how they view other people, how a church is built, how they even look at church. The way they see Him, the way they view Him, that trickles out. So, if they see Jesus as this kind of Pharisaic master of morality who demands perfection, then what they'll do is they will morally confine to that and then they'll expect everyone to be likewise. And in so doing, you become the older brother. And if you see Jesus as this man who sees dirty people and clean people and wicked people and right people, then what ends up happening is you see people that way. Now listen, what I think ends up happening to us is Zacchaeus being a wee little man has created in us this kind of sorrow and we feel sorry for him, but he was a wicked, evil, horrible man who saw his own people slaughtered and got rich off of it. Let's not make him pretty. He is not pretty. He deserved to be gutted. And Jesus goes, "Let's go to your house. Let's eat. Why? Because there's coming this day that the gospel is unleashed on the world and

that day is now, and I am pursuing what was lost. I am taking out furniture, I am lighting lamps, I am sweeping floors, I am leaving the ninety-nine, the Jews, I am finding My sheep, My coin, My prodigal sons." And so, I just want you to see Him tonight. I just want you to see who He is. If you would not just do church tonight, but if you would let this sink into your mind and your heart, that this is who Jesus is. What is the most wicked and deplorable human being you could imagine, He engages with love and mercy and hope. He engages a class of people that everyone would say, "Aw, I don't want them anywhere near me. I don't want them anywhere near my family." We probably do have those in America, this kind of "sinner" idea. "I don't want them to get around when they start acting...My kids will start acting..." So, I'm hoping that maybe you'd just see Him tonight. Seeing Him for who He really is, it does something to the soul. It just really does, unless you're blind. And then, I'm hoping that, by seeing Him, we'll begin to see that Jesus loves the prodigal. He doesn't hate them. He has not wrath for the prodigal, but love and hope. And my hope is that those two things would collide in our heart and change the way we see the church, change the way we live our lives, change the way we see our neighbors, change the way we feel when other people fall into sin, when we fall into sin. And that with our forty years here, I say it over and over again, I don't plan on going anywhere. I am Village until I die, whenever that is. With our forty or fifty years here, we might be lamps and we might be bristles and we might move couches. Because I think if you don't, you've got no hope but to become the older brother. So may we, seeing and savoring Jesus, have the Holy Spirit work in us so that sheep might be found, coins might be gathered, the prodigal son be welcomed home and might we be the older brother that runs into the party and not sit outside of it.

"Father, I thank You so much for these men and women, and I thank You for a chance tonight to just open up the Scriptures and pray. I pray for the prodigals in this room who, at one time, ran away thinking it felt like freedom only to find themselves enslaved. I pray that they would hear Your love for them. I pray for men and women who are thinking about running. I pray for lost sheep and lost coins, and I pray for the older brother. Help us. It's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen."