

Trobhad Dhachaigh!

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 15.

The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 15. And if you read again at verse 17. Luke 15, verse 17. But when he, that is the prodigal son, 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. 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.

[1 : 10] And so on. I don't know about you, but I'm going to miss the faith mission.

You know, especially the team that were with us for the past three weeks. It's been a great blessing and a wonderful privilege to have the faith mission working in our community, presenting to us the glory of the Gospel in Jesus Christ.

And one thing I enjoyed was the singing in the tent. The singing was wonderful. The beautiful singing of a mix of psalms and hymns. It was a great encouragement to many as we gathered together in worship.

But over the past couple of weeks, there's been one hymn that has stuck in my mind. And I can't seem to get it out of my head. And it's a hymn that was written by W.L. Thompson in the late 19th century.

And it's called Softly and Tenderly. And it was written, this hymn, it was written as an evangelistic hymn. It was written to remind the unconverted that they need to come home to Jesus.

[2 : 17] And it's a beautiful hymn that stresses to us that when the Gospel is preached, Jesus is calling to us. He's calling to us to come home to him.

And the lyrics of the hymn, they're actually printed in your intimations. I had to make sure that you had them. In the intimations, if you read it, the opening verse, it reads, Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling.

Calling for you and for me. Patiently, Jesus is waiting and watching. Watching for you and for me. Come home. Come home.

Ye who are weary, come home. Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling. Calling, O sinner, come home. You know, the reason this hymn has been in my mind for the past couple of weeks is because of those two words. Come home. Come home.

[3 : 14] And you know, I often think of these words in relation to the unconverted in our congregation and even in our community. But you know, my unconverted friend, when I think of you and when I pray for you, longing that you'll be converted, for some strange reason, I always say these words in Gaelic.

And as you know, to my shame, I can't speak Gaelic. But with the little Gaelic that I sort of know, the words that keep coming to me when I think of you and when I pray for you is throat gache.

Throat gache. And you know, that's what the parable of the prodigal son is all about. It's all about the love of the father waiting and watching for his son to come home.

He's waiting and watching for his son to throat gache. But you know, when we read this parable, we always read it from the perspective of the prodigal son.

The prodigal son who went away from his father into the far country. But this evening, I want us to think about this parable from the perspective of the patient father.

[4 : 27] Because what comes across so clearly and so beautifully in this parable is that the father was patient with both of his sons. The father was patient as he waited and watched for his prodigal

son to come home.

But the father was also patient with his older, self-righteous, and self-centered son who stayed at home. And what's remarkable about this parable is that both sons were lost.

Both sons needed to come home. Both sons needed to be told, Throat gache. Both sons needed to be told, Throat gache.

And you know, I'd just like us to consider this parable, this well-known parable this evening, under three simple headings. Three simple headings. The parable setting, the prodigal son, and then the proud son.

The parable setting, the prodigal son, and the proud son. So first of all, the parable setting. The parable setting. Look at verse 1 of chapter 15.

[5 : 32] Where we're told there, Luke tells us, Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.

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?

And you know, before we begin considering these two lost sons, who needed to come home to their father, I want us to consider the parable's setting. Because I believe that the context of the parable, will help us understand the content of the parable.

And as you all know, context is always important. And the context of this parable, as we read in verses 1 and 2, is that the crowds, they all gathered together to listen to Jesus.

Many people came to hear Jesus preach. Crowds gathered. But some of the crowds, they gathered for the wrong reason. They were there with a wrong motive.

[6 : 38] They were there with a wrong desire. Crowds had gathered together, to listen to Jesus. And you know, just as an aside, it's easy to go along in the crowd.

It's very easy to go along in the crowd. Because a crowd always attracts a crowd. That's human nature. And it's easy to follow the crowd. It's easy to blend into the crowd.

It's even easy to get lost in the crowd. Just like it was here, for all the crowds that were gathering around Jesus. But you know, sadly in the Gospels, the crowds were often viewed as a negative thing.

Because Jesus, he isn't into big crowds. Jesus isn't into the numbers game of counting church attendance. Jesus isn't into crowds because, well, the Bible reminds us, there are crowds in hell.

But you know, Jesus, he wants disciples. Jesus wants disciples. Jesus wants people. He wants individuals who will deny themselves and come after Jesus and take up their cross and follow him.

[7 : 45] And you know, Jesus would far rather one disciple who's completely committed to him than 10,000 people who remain uncommitted in a crowd. Because being part of the crowd, it doesn't mean anything.

It doesn't count for anything. What counts is wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ. And that must be personal. It must be individual. It can't be a crowd thing.

But you know, this crowd that listened to Jesus, it was a mixed crowd. Just like it is this evening.

There are some here this evening who are committed Christians. There are some who are uncommitted.

There are some who are converted. There are some who are unconverted. And we're all part of this crowd and we're all listening this evening to Jesus. And in the context of this chapter, you know, Luke here, he actually identifies those who were part of the crowd.

He says in verses 1 and 2 that there were tax collectors, there were sinners, there were Pharisees, and there were scribes. But as they all listened to Jesus, some distinctions begin to be made.

[8 : 54] And they're made between those who are listening to Jesus and those who are grumbling against Jesus. This distinction is between those who see their need of Jesus and those who don't.

The distinction is between those who are sinners and those who are self-righteous. And you know, as Jesus speaks, this distinction, this separation, it becomes more and more apparent.

And you know, that's what always happens every time Jesus speaks. That's always what happens when the gospel is preached. A distinction is made and a separation is drawn between those who are converted and those who are unconverted.

Those who are in Christ and those who are out of Christ. And the distinction in this crowd is between those who are sinners. Sinners who want to be committed sinners who want to be committed.

And there is also the distinction between those who are too self-righteous and they don't want to be committed to Jesus. The distinction is between sinners who want to be committed and those who are too self-righteous to commit their life to Jesus Christ.

[10:04] And you know, it makes you realize that context is so important because that's what the parable of the two lost sons is about. One is a sinner. The other is self-righteous.

But both sons are lost. Both sons need to come home to the father. Both sons need to hear the words of the father. Throw it yachy. Both sons need to hear the words of the father.

Come home. But you know, what we should also note from this parable setting is that these three illustrations of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the two lost sons, they're all one parable.

They're all one parable. That's what we're told in verse 3. We're told, so Jesus told them this parable. These three illustrations, they're all one parable.

They're one continuous story with the same meaning and the same emphasis. And their emphasis is that there's joy found in salvation and there's rejoicing in heaven when a sinner humbly turns to God in repentance.

[11:11] And this, you know, this parable of Jesus is wonderful and it addresses, it addresses everyone in the crowd, whether they're committed or uncommitted, whether they're converted or unconverted. It addresses everyone in the crowd because the sinner thinks that they're unworthy of salvation and the self-righteous person thinks that they don't need salvation.

It addresses everyone in the crowd. But Jesus speaks to the crowd using a parable. And that was the way in which Jesus always spoke.

We see that again and again in the Gospels. In fact, the Gospels tell us that Jesus never spoke to the crowds without using a parable. But, you know, the parables of Jesus, they weren't just sermon illustrations that were used to entertain the crowd in order to keep their attention.

No, the purpose of the parable was to get the listener, to get you and me deeply involved in this parable and see that we are being portrayed in this parable.

And that when we see ourselves in the parable, it should compel us to make a personal decision, not a crowd decision, but a personal decision about following Jesus.

[12:25] And, you know, that's why Jesus asks the question at the beginning of verse 4, which man of you? Or, which one of you? He says. Jesus, he brings us into the parable.

And he makes us see that this parable is all about us. And that we are being portrayed in the parable. And Jesus, he's compelling us to make a personal decision about following him.

Jesus is asking the question, which one of you? Which man of you? Which one of you sinners or self-righteous people? He's saying, who are you in the parable?

Who are you? Who do you see yourself as in the parable? Who are you in the parable? In this parable about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the two lost sons, Jesus is asking, who are you in this parable?

Are you lost? Or are you found? Are you still in the far country? Or have you come home to the father? Are you still self-righteous before God?

[13:29] Or have you come to know the love and forgiveness of the father? Who are you in the parable? Which son are you in the parable?

Because at the beginning of the parable, both sons are lost. Both sons need to come home to the father. Both sons need to hear the words of the father.

Throw it, Yahi. Throw it, Yahi. Come home. Come home. My friend, are you the prodigal son who sees himself as a sinner?

Or are you the proud son who is too self-righteous to admit that he's a sinner? Where are you in the parable? Where are you in the parable?

Well, that's a parable setting. But secondly, let's consider the prodigal son. The prodigal son. Look at verse 11. Jesus said there was a man who had two sons.

[14:32] 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. Now, we mentioned earlier that we're going to think about the parable from the perspective of the patient father.

Because what comes across so beautifully in this parable is that the father was patient with both his sons. The father was patient as he waited and watched for his prodigal son to come back home. But you know, the prodigal son, he didn't leave home with the blessing of his father. He didn't leave home in a relationship with his father. The prodigal son left home wishing his father was dead. Because to ask for your inheritance while your father was still alive, still living, that was classed as very disrespectful, extremely disrespectful. Because the younger son, he was basically saying to his father, you're dead to me.

You're dead to me. You're of no benefit to me. You're in my way. You're restricting my life. You're holding me back. And you're cramping my style. And I just want you gone.

[15:45] I want you out of my life. And you know, many people view God and Christianity and becoming a Christian just like that. Maybe that's how you see it.

Where you see Christianity as a religion of rules, regulations, and restrictions. Christians. And you see it as it's also binding.

It's binding and it's restrictive where you have all these restraints on you. Because, well, if you were to become a Christian, if you were to follow Jesus and deny yourself and take up your cross, you can't do what you want anymore.

You can't live the way you want to live anymore. You can't have fun according to your standard of fun anymore. So, becoming a Christian to you, it seems like you're restricting yourself and restraining yourself.

But, my friend, you've got it all wrong. Oh, you've got it all wrong. You know this, I've never known joy until I became a Christian. I've never known laughter until I became a Christian.

[16:50] You know, that's one of the devil's greatest lies, that Christianity and becoming a Christian, it restricts you and restrains you. because the truth is, when you become a Christian, you're not restricted or restrained, you're released.

You're released. You're set free. You're released from this bondage of sin where you feel that you need to live your life according to the standards of other people and the world around you.

You're released from the fear of what other people think and what other people will say and what some people might do if you become a Christian. You know, my unconverted friend, I tell you that it's you that's restricted.

Living your life in bondage, restricted and restrained by your love of sin and your love of the world and your love of what people think of you. But you know, there's freedom and there's fulfillment when you trust in Jesus Christ.

And you know, Christians, they seek, they fail in many ways and they'll always fail, we'll always fail, but we seek to live according to the word of God for the glory of God, not because we feel we have to follow all these rules of religion with all these restraints and restrictions.

[18:08] You know, Christians live according to the word of God because they love their heavenly father. That's why. And they want to please him. Christians live according, seek to live according to the word of God because they love their heavenly father.

But you know, this prodigal here, he didn't love his father. He wanted him dead. He wanted him out of his life. He wanted the father gone. The prodigal son didn't want what he thought were rules, restrictions, and restraint upon his life.

So we're told in verse 13, not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and took a journey into the far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living.

The prodigal son, he lives up to his name. He did things his own way. He went as far away from the love, care, and compassion of his father as he possibly could.

You know, what a way to describe where the prodigal son went, the far country. He went as far away as he could from the father. And no doubt, as the prodigal son ran away to enjoy himself and squander his inheritance in prodigal living, no doubt, the father would have been calling to him to come home.

[19:34] The father would have pleaded with him even as he left. He would have pleaded with his younger son, even trying to reason with him, urging him, come home, throw it yachie. And even as the son ran away off to the far country, which to what he thought would be this better life, more exciting, more fulfilling, the father would have still been calling to him, throw it yachie, come back to me, come back to me.

But you know, like all of us who have refused to listen and rebelled against our heavenly father, the prodigal refused to listen and he rebelled against his father. And the prodigal, we're told, he went off to the far country to live life his own way, to make his own rules, to do his own thing, without the rules and the restrictions and the restraint of his father.

But as is always the case, it only lasted for a season. Because we're told in verse 14, 13, 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.

The prodigal son only continued prodigal living for a season, only for a season. It didn't take long for the fairy tale to come to an end, and everything had changed.

[21 : 12] Life had changed, his circumstances had changed, his wealth, and even his health had changed. But is that not how it is with life? Nothing ever stands still.

Even if we want to live our life our own way, and do our own thing, life, it eventually catches up with us, doesn't it? And all the ills of life, they begin to take over.

And my friend, I need not remind you that we live in a world full of change, where our lives change, our health changes, our wealth changes, our family around us changes, our home changes, and we even as people change.

Nothing ever stands still. But you know the wonderful thing here in this parable is that Jesus is reminding us that there's one person in this parable who never changed, and that was the father. He never changed. The love and care and compassion of the father towards his prodigal son never changed. Despite the rebellion of the prodigal son, despite his rejection of his own father, despite running away from home into the far country and even the ruin of his own life, the love of the father never changed.

[22 : 35] It never wavered, it never faltered for a moment, because as the prodigal son was looking and longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs were eating, the father, he was looking and longing for his son to come home.

And for you, my friend, this evening, as a prodigal son or a prodigal daughter, still out in the far country, still living your life in rebellion and rejection and resistance and even running from your heavenly father, let me tell you, your heavenly father is still looking and longing for you to come home.

Because after all these years, believe it or not, he still loves you and he's still saying to you, you come home to me.

But like the prodigal son, you might think that as a sinner, well, I'm too unworthy to come home now because, well, I've been so disobedient for so many years.

I've resisted the gospel for so long. I've been in the far country for so many years of my life. and maybe you feel ashamed. Maybe you feel that you've left it too late.

[23 : 58] You've wasted so many years of your life away from home in the far country. And because of that, you know that you're completely unworthy of the father's love and care and compassion towards you.

And like the prodigal, maybe you think that you're an unworthy sinner who doesn't deserve anything from the father. But my friend, isn't that the beauty of the gospel?

Isn't that what the gospel is all about? That none of us are worthy. Not one of us is worthy. We're all unworthy prodigals who don't deserve the love and care and compassion of our heavenly father.

And yet, and yet, it's our heavenly father who's looking and longing, he's waiting and watching, he's patiently pleading, throw it, yachie. Oh, throw it, yachie, come home to me.

That's his plea, throw it, yachie. You come home to me. Throw it, yachie. And you know, I love what we read in verse 20, where it says, the son, the prodigal son, he arose and came to his father.

[25 : 12] But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him. This patient father who had been looking and longing, waiting and watching, patiently pleading for his son to throw it, yachie.

And yet, when his father sees the prodigal son out in the distance, he's filled with love towards him. There's not an ounce of hate towards him.

He's filled with love. And he has compassion on his son. And he runs towards his son, which is something that would be unheard of for a Jewish man to do. But the father runs out to his prodigal

son and he welcomes him home.

And we read in the following verses that the son, the son tries to ask for forgiveness. Note that. The son tries to ask for forgiveness, but the father has already forgiven him.

The father has already forgiven him. And notice the father doesn't even ask his prodigal son. He doesn't say where have you been? He doesn't say what have you done? He doesn't even ask what did you spend all your inheritance on?

[26 : 19] He doesn't ask any of these questions. He's only glad he came home. He's only rejoicing that he came home. The father he's so glad that his whole house is then filled with rejoicing.

We're told in verse 22, 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. Make him a king he's doing.

Bring the fattened calf and kill it. 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.

There was rejoicing in the father's house because the prodigal came home. And that's what the parable is all about. Jesus has repeatedly said that there's rejoicing in heaven when an unworthy sinner repents.

There's rejoicing in the father's house when an unworthy sinner turns away from their sin and turns to the Lord in repentance. And that's what the prodigal son did.

[27 : 23] He came home. He came home. That was the father's longing for him. And my friend that's your heavenly father's longing for you.

That you would come home. that you would throw it, Yaghi. Throw it, Yaghi. You come home.

You come home. But as we said, the father had two lost sons. And both of the sons needed to come home. The father had patiently waited and watched for his prodigal son to come home.

But the father also had to patiently correct and call his proud son, who was too self-righteous and too self-centered to come home. And so we've considered the parable setting, then the prodigal son, but lastly and more briefly as it is in the passage, the proud son.

The proud son. Look at verse 25. Now the father's 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.

[28 : 38] 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. Then his father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, look, these many years I have served you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends.

But when this son of yours who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf and for him. And you know, when we consider this parable, we often focus our attention upon the prodigal son and emphasize how lost he was.

But the sad reality of this parable is that both sons were lost. Both sons needed to come home. Both sons needed to hear the call of the father, throw it yachie.

They both needed to be told, throw it yachie. Because even the older son, even though he didn't act like his younger sibling by squandering all his inheritance on prodigal living, the older son, he failed to take advantage of all his privileges.

Because as the older son, he would have received more of the inheritance from his father. And as the one who stayed at home, who didn't run away to the far country, he would have been given all the family privileges.

[30 : 05] But instead of being thankful for all these privileges, these privileges made him proud. And when he compared himself to his prodigal brother, the proud son, he became self righteous and self centred.

And he was so proud that when his father went out to call him to come home, he refused. He just refused. And you know, my unconverted friend, I sometimes wonder, maybe in your own heart, you are more like the proud son than the prodigal son.

I sometimes wonder you are like this older son than the younger son. Because you've had a privileged upbringing. You've been brought up under the sound of the gospel.

You've had a great inheritance. You have a wonderful gospel inheritance. You've been given many gospel privileges. Many of you have had Christian parents.

some of you have a father who was an elder. Mother who was a godly woman. And these parents, your parents, they prayed for you and they taught you the Bible as you sat on their knee. You've had wonderful teachers and Sunday school teachers who pointed you to Jesus.

[31 : 26] You've had all these privileges. You sat under the ministry of many different preachers who have counseled you and called you to come to Christ for salvation. Some of you this evening, you're even married to a Christian.

Some of you have Christian children. Some of you even have brothers and sisters who are Christians. You're surrounded by gospel privileges. Surrounded by it.

You've had so many gospel privileges. And maybe the reality is that in your heart you just cling to all these things but not to Jesus. You cling to all these privileges.

churches. And maybe you proudly say, well I've always attended church. I was baptized in church. I read my Bible. I'm good to my neighbor.

I've always worked hard in my life. I'm a good person. I'm not like other people. I'm not even like some Christians I know. I'm in church more than they are. I don't live a life like they do. I'm better than them.

[32 : 28] But my friend, just like the proud son who was self-righteous and self-centered, you're lost. You're lost. You are lost.

And I cannot stress that to you enough. That without Christ, as your Savior, you are lost.

And you need to repent. If you're the proud son, you need to repent of your self-righteousness and commit your life to Jesus Christ. You need to humbly confess Jesus Christ as your Lord, not yourself.

But he must be your Lord and your Savior. You need to come home. You need to come home.

Because the Father is saying to you tonight, son, daughter, throw it yachie.

Throw it yachie. You know, my unconverted friend, as Jesus gave the parable setting, he wanted to know, who are you in the parable?

[33 : 39] Who are you in the parable? Are you the prodigal son? Or are you the proud son?

Because both sons are lost. Both sons need to come home. Both sons need to hear the call of their father.

Throw it yachie. Throw it yachie. And you know, is that not why W.L. Thompson wrote those wonderful words? The words of that hymn, softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.

Patently, Jesus is waiting and watching, watching for you and for me. Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me?

Why should we linger and heed not his mercies? Mercies for you and for me. Time is now fleeting. The moments are passing, passing from you and from me.

Shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming, coming for you and for me. Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me.

[34 : 45] Though we have sinned, his mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. Come home. come home. Ye who are weary, come home.

Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, come home. may the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray. Amen. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for the parable that we have been studying this evening.

A reminder, Lord, that Jesus is able to speak to us in so many ways and that he is able to speak to us so personally, individually, and almost directly.

And Lord, we pray that we would heed his voice because he is calling us to come home softly and tenderly. Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.

[35 : 57] And Lord, we thank thee that he does call, that he is so merciful and so gracious, that he would call sinners such as we are, that we would not be proud, but that we would humble ourselves and come, come to this Jesus who is able to save to the uttermost.

Bless us then, Lord, we pray. Bless thy word to our souls. May it find lodgment in our heart. May we be kept, Lord, even in the week that lies ahead. Watch over us, we pray.

And we pray even that this evening, that tonight, that we would be rejoicing in heaven among the presence of the angels, over sinners coming home.

Bless us then, we pray. Do us good for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 103.

Psalm 103 is in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 103, Psalm 103, singing from verse 12, page 370, Psalm 103, singing from verse 12 down to the verse marked 16.

[37 : 19] Psalm 103 is a psalm that reminds us of who God is and who we are. And even in these verses, we're reminded of God's love for us and that what he's able to do with our sin, he's able to remove it as far as east is distant from the west.

And the reason he does it is because of his love, his fatherly love and care towards us. So that's who God is. The second two verses, or the second three verses remind us who we are.

We're only passing through. Our time is short and eternity is long. So the best option for us is to seek the Lord while he's to be found.

As far as east is distant from the west, so far as he from us removed in his love all our iniquity. Such pity as a father hath unto his children dear, like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear. And we'll sing on down to the verse marked 16 of Psalm 103 to God's praise. verse 16 of the verse 16 of the song. As far as east is distant from the west, so far hath he from us remove it in his love, all our iniquity.

[38 : 52] such pity as a mother hath unto his children dear.

Like pity shows the Lord to start us worshiping him in fear.

For he remembers we are done, and he our dream well knows.

frail man his days star like the grass as far in field he grows.

For over it the wind of us and it away is gone.

[40 : 16] And of the place where once it was there shall no more be known.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.