

God's Lost and Found: The Older Son

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[0 : 00] Today's scripture reading comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 15. Please follow along in your bulletin. And he said, A man had two sons.

The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me my share of the estate that falls to me. So he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country.

And there he squandered his estate with loose living. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country and he began to be impoverished.

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pots that the swine were eating and no one was giving anything to him.

But when he came to his senses, he said, How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread? But I am dying here with hunger. I will get up to my father and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight.

[1 : 11] I am no longer to be worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired men. So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer to be worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his slaves, Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him and put on a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

For this son of mine was dead and has come to life again. He was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate. Now his older son was in the field.

And when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 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 became angry and was not willing to go in. And his father came out and began pleading with him. But he answered his father and said, Look, for so many years I've been serving you.

[2 : 41] I've never neglected a command of yours. And yet you have never given me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.

And he said to him, Son, you've always been with me. And all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice. For this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live again and was lost and has been found.

This is God's word. Good morning. How is everyone today? Wow, everyone's asleep apparently. How is everyone? Okay, that's a little better.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Eric. I'm the youth guy here at Watermark. I've been here a little over a year now, I guess. And as you heard, we're talking today about a story about a lost son.

And I wanted to start out today looking back at what's been happening in this passage before we get to this story because it's sort of important as we look at this story to see the context that it's in.

[3 : 54] So as we look at this story of this lost son, what we see is actually that Jesus is telling a series of stories. It's three stories in a row about things that are lost and found.

First, there's a sheep. This man has a hundred sheep. One of them wanders away. He goes out. He searches for the sheep. He leaves the 99 that are there, goes out, gets this sheep, brings it back, and has a party to celebrate that this sheep that was lost has been found.

Next up, there's a woman. She has 10 coins, and one of them goes missing. She leaves the nine where she knows where they are and scouring her house, looks up, down, left, right, everywhere she can for this lost coin until she finds it.

And when she does, she has a party, invites all her friends over, and they celebrate because this coin that was lost is found. And then we get to today's story. There's a father.

He has two sons. The younger one comes to him and says, Dad, give me my share of the inheritance. Basically, I don't care about you. I just want your stuff. So give me my stuff so I can go. The dad gives him his share of the inheritance, and he leaves.

[5 : 02] He goes out to a foreign land. He spends all his money, parties it up, has fun, enjoys life, runs out of money, and right as he does, boom, a famine hits the land.

And so this man has no money, and even if he had friends who'd be willing to help him, they didn't really have anything to help him with because there was no food available in the land. He looks for a job, gets a job feeding pigs, which for a Jewish boy was like the worst job you could ever have, and gets to the point where he's so desperate and so low that he just wants to eat the food that he is feeding to the pigs.

And he takes a step back, and he looks at his life, and he realizes, wow, in my dad's house, everyone, even the lowest servants, at least they have food to eat.

And I've basically forfeited my right to be a son anymore, but maybe I can go back. Maybe I can say to my dad, hey, I'll work for you. I'll be your servant. I'll try and pay back maybe some of what I owe you.

And at least then I can have some food in my stomach. I won't have to feed these pigs. It'll be okay. So he goes home, starts this journey along, going back, and his dad sees him from far away and runs out and gives him a huge hug.

[6 : 22] And the son says, Dad, I'm sorry. I sinned against you and against God. I don't deserve to be your son anymore. Please just take me back as a slave. And the dad says, Son, come.

You are my son. We're putting the best robe on you. We're putting a ring on you. We're putting sandals on you. We're celebrating. We're going to have a party because you were gone. You were dead. And now you are back. Now you are alive.

And so they have this huge, huge party. And there's another son in this story. This son is the older brother. He's out working in the field.

He has been working in the field the entire time that the younger brother has been gone. working hard, working long hours, doing his work, being industrious.

And he hears the sound of a party going on back home. And he calls one of the slaves over. And he says, What's going on down there? The slave says, There's a party. Your brother who left, he's come back.

[7 : 20] And this older brother is furious. Rather than rejoicing that his brother has come back, he is angry and bitter and refuses to go into the party.

The father comes out, which he should never have had to do, to invite his son into the party, the celebration. And the older brother complains, Dad, I've never disobeyed you.

Dad, I've always done exactly what I was supposed to do. Come on, why can't I have a party with my friends? And the dad basically tells him, Look, your brother, he was gone.

He was dead. He's alive again. He left us and he has come back. We need to celebrate. Look, everything that I have, it's yours already. You can do whatever you want with it. But we have to celebrate right now because your brother was gone and he has come back.

Come join the party. And the story ends. And two weeks ago, Mike spoke on the younger brother. He shared about the journey of the younger brother and what it took for him to come back and this whole process.

[8 : 27] But today we're looking at a different character in the story. We're looking at the older brother. And personally for me, the older brother is actually one of the characters in the Bible that I can relate to the best.

I am an older brother. I'm the oldest of four boys. And growing up, I would get in trouble occasionally, but I was always like the good kid. And my brothers got really annoyed by that.

I was the kid in Sunday school class. We'd have little charts and we'd have stickers for like Bible memory verses and Bible reading and stuff. And you get prizes if you got enough stickers. And I was the one who would have stickers all the way across and the rest of the class would have like two or three stickers each.

That was me. I was the kid in school who like every teacher wanted me in their class because I was well behaved and I got my straight A's. And my brothers actually hated having teachers that I had had before because the teachers expected them to live up to that standard that I had set.

And so I was the ideal older brother. I did everything right and I had this all down and my younger brothers knew it. They knew that I had it all down and they knew that they were expected to have it all together because I had had it all together.

[9 : 43] And so they really did not enjoy that. And I didn't really enjoy it either because when they would go in there and they would have these same teachers that I had had and they would get a B in that class, I'd be like, you let me down.

Come on, bro. And so I can really relate to the older brother and his feeling of how this younger brother had let him down because he hadn't lived up to the same standard that he had lived up to.

And as we've gotten older, my brothers have actually turned out pretty okay. But my older brother complex I think is something that has definitely stuck around.

And so today we're going to take a closer look at the older brother in the story. We're going to see what it is about him that makes him refuse to go into this party, refuse to celebrate, refuse to rejoice in the fact that his brother has come home and see what parts of our lives reflect him.

And as we look at this older brother, the first thing that I want us to see is that yes, this older brother has always stayed at home. He has always obeyed perfectly everything the father has ever commanded him to do.

[10 : 54] However, despite his obedience, he was just as lost as his younger brother. Even though he had stayed home, even though he had not run away, even though he had worked to build the family fortune instead of going to a far off land and squandering it, he was just as lost as his younger brother.

The first thing we see of the older brother in this story is that he's refusing to come into a party to celebrate the return of his younger brother. He stands outside the party, not just despite his obedience, but actually because of his obedience.

The father welcomes him in to this rejoicing, and the son says, no, because I have been such a good kid, I'm not going in. His obedience keeps him away from the father.

It's actually a form of rebellion in some ways. And ultimately, it's because he doesn't see himself as a son. He sees himself as a slave. The older brother does not understand that he is a son to the father.

He thinks that he is a slave to the father. And we see this as soon as the father comes out to talk to him. The father comes out, he says, hey, we got a party going on inside. Do you want to come? And rather than saying, hey, I'm your son too, the older brother's response is that I have always perfectly obeyed everything you've commanded me to do.

[12 : 24] He says, I have been the ideal slave. Not I have been the ideal son, I have been the ideal slave, and I deserve special treatment because of my obedience.

Basically, his sense of justice had been messed up. I have always perfectly obeyed, he hasn't. I deserve special treatment, he doesn't. He is getting special treatment, and I am not.

That is not right, that is not fair, I am not going in. And the reason that this sense of justice has been let down is because he sees himself as a slave rather than a son.

But the problem with the older brother is that his complaints to the father are based on a wrong understanding of their relationship. And the father sees this immediately.

Mike talked last time about how the father is a good father, he knows his sons. When the younger son came to him, the father could have said, no, I am not giving you your inheritance, you are staying here. But instead, he knew his son well enough to give him the inheritance, let the son go off, and wait for the son to come back.

[13 : 31] With the older son, he could have used this son's arguments against the older son. He entreats the older son, he says to him, hey, come into the party. And the older son says, no, I've always perfectly obeyed everything.

And the father has the option at this moment to give him a command, come to the party now. If you say you've always perfectly obeyed, perfectly obey now, come inside. The father doesn't do that.

He knows that the issues in his son's heart are deeper than mere obedience issues. The issues in his son's heart come from a wrong understanding of their relationship.

And so rather than issuing the son a command, you need to come now. Rather than arguing with the son, saying, no, you haven't always perfectly obeyed me. Remember that time you disobeyed with whatever?

The father changes the whole topic of the conversation with his son. Rather than saying, no, you haven't been the perfect slave, he says, I don't want you to relate to me as a slave.

[14 : 38] I don't want to be a commander who bosses you around. I want to be your father who loves you. I want you to be my son. The question that we are dealing with here is not, have you always perfectly obeyed everything I said, but do I want you to treat me as a commander?

And the answer is no. The father wants the son to treat him as a father, to love him, not to see it as I need to do this in order to get what I can.

That ultimately his obedience as a slave didn't determine whether the father accepted him because he was already accepted by the father for his status as a son. And because the older brother misunderstood this, rather than bringing love into his relationship with the father, he brought hatred and anger and bitterness that were poisonous to their relationship.

Also, because the brother had a messed up understanding of his relationship with the father, he has a messed up understanding of the father's possessions as well. Because he sees himself as a slave rather than a son, he sees the father's possessions as his wages for obedience rather than his possessions already.

I mean, basically, if you look at the older brother's argument, a lot of his argument about not coming into the party when the younger brother comes home has to do with the fact that this party costs so much and you spent it all on him and not on me.

[16:03] You owe me, Dad. I've always been here. I've always been working. I've always been industrious. He hasn't. He went and wasted all your money and now you're giving him more. What's up with that?

The issue is that because the son saw himself as a slave rather than a son, he saw the father's possessions as his wages rather than as his own possessions.

And the father sees this as well. He jumps up and he says, hey, everything that I own, it's yours. Everything that I have belongs to you now.

You know, yeah, I haven't given you this kid so that you can have a party with your friends, but guess what? You own all of them. It's like this kid's waiting for his dad to hand him a \$10 bill and the dad's like, look, you've already got a bank account with a million dollars in it.

Don't complain. I'm not withholding. You just don't understand what's already in front of you. And so because the son doesn't understand his relationship with his father correctly, he doesn't understand how the father's possessions relate to him as well.

[17:11] and he becomes bitter against his brother because he sees these possessions as more valuable than his family. Basically, culturally, the inheritance got divided up so that the older brother got twice as much as the younger one.

So the older brother would get two-thirds of the father's wealth. The younger brother would get one-third. When the younger brother came and asked his dad for his share of the inheritance, the father would have given him a third of everything the father had.

The younger brother goes off. He goes to a far-off land. He spends it all. And in doing this, he forfeits his position as a son in the family. In order for him to come back to the family, he would need to be adopted back, which means that he once again would receive a share of the inheritance.

Which means for the older brother, rather than getting two-thirds of what the father has, he gets two-thirds of two-thirds of what the father has once the brother comes back. And because he sees the possessions as more valuable than the family, he becomes bitter when the brother comes back because he knows that this is going to cost him a lot financially and he doesn't want to bear that burden.

He sees the money as more valuable than the brother. And here's the thing, money is not bad. Material possessions are a good thing. They are blessings from God. But when we view them as more important than God or when we view them as more important than the people that God has put in our lives, that becomes an issue.

[18:43] And I think as we look at the older brother and these issues that are going on in his life, a lot of times they can reflect us. They can reflect the attitudes and thoughts that are going on in our hearts.

Maybe not to such an extreme level, but I think they're there. I think a lot of times we can look at our immediate present circumstances and see something not going our way and think, hey, God's withholding from me right now because we can't see the full picture because we don't understand that he is a good father and that we are his children rather than his slaves.

Ultimately, the Bible says that God is a good father, that we are his children, that we are not his slaves, and that through Christ he has given us everything.

The question is, do we see that? Do we understand that? Or do we look at a business transaction that didn't go through that cost us a lot of money and say, God is withholding from me right now.

God is not a good father because he didn't give this to me. And I think, you know, this is something that even happens with me. So for me, I think it's very easy to look at all of the things that I've done for God.

[19 : 58] To look at everything that I've accomplished and to think that God owes me because of that. A couple months ago I was having some stomach issues and I went in to have some tests done and I had been having these issues for a long time and I thought to myself, I really hope God heals me right now.

And I looked back through the list of things that I had done for God. I mean, I was top of my high school class. I could have gotten a top level college education that could have gotten me an incredibly high paying job and I didn't.

I went and studied Bible so I could go into the ministry. I gave up lots of money in order to go and follow him. When I was in college, you know, during my summers, instead of going and partying it up, I went and worked at a Christian camp so I could tell kids about Jesus.

And then my third summer of college, I packed up and I moved overseas to Hong Kong to work in a church. And I'd been here for two years away from my family, away from my friends back home, and I looked at all of these things that I had done for God and I said, God, look, look at everything that I have done for you.

You owe this to me to fix me and make me better to heal my stomach. I had this mentality of a slave rather than a son and I looked at the things that I had done. I looked at my obedience and I said, God owes me for these things rather than recognizing that every breath that I get is a gift from him.

[21 : 26] And ultimately, you know, it turned out that the thing that I had was not easily curable, that it's probably something that's chronic that's going to stick with me for a long time if not forever.

And when I found that out, I was upset, I was angry, I was, I felt like God had let me down, like God was withholding from me something good that I thought I deserved because of this big brother attitude.

And so, you know, as I talk today about the big brother, I think I'm the primary person that I'm talking to because this mentality of the big brother is something that is so strong within me.

And I think within the church, the big brother attitude is sometimes even encouraged because obedience is a good thing. We want obedience. And so, we take people who are obedient and we give them these higher positions in the church.

but in reality, this can create problems because when we're in this big brother mentality, we look at ourselves as our means of salvation.

[22 : 28] We look at our slavery and our service to God as the way that we are saved rather than recognizing that we are sinners who need grace. And the thing is, if you're sick and you know that you're sick, you'll go to a doctor, you can get cured.

If you're sick and you don't know you're sick, you don't go to the doctor, you just die. If you're a sinner and you know that you're a sinner, you go to the Savior to be saved. If you're a sinner and you don't know that you're a sinner, you don't go to the Savior, you just die.

And I think that this older brother mentality keeps us from recognizing the fact that we are sinners. It keeps us from running to the Savior, the only one who can fix our brokenness and just leaves us in this place where we're left to ourselves and where we die separated from God.

And as we look at our lives and our hearts and we see what is it that are the traits of the big brother, I sort of brainstormed this week and thought about what are traits that would appear in the big brother, in the older brother.

The first one I came up with is that older brothers are very fast to admit that they're sinners in a broad and general sense but slow to admit the specific sins that they deal with. We're older brothers, we have our doctrine down.

[23 : 44] We know that all have sinned. We're not going to mess that one up on a Bible trivia test but when someone says what specific sins do you deal with, it gets really quiet really fast because we don't want to admit actually how messed up we are.

We just want to admit vaguely that we're messed up so that people don't think that we're full of ourselves. The next trait of older brothers is that we harbor anger, bitterness, and envy in our hearts when our sense of justice isn't upheld.

Because we see God as a slave master and ourselves as slaves, we don't like it when other people that we think have done a less good job, a worse job, being slaves, get good things and we don't.

When someone else gets some type of amazing house, you know, houses like I said are good things, good houses are good things but when someone else gets them and we don't and we look at God and we say, hey, what's going on?

That's not fair. We have anger and bitterness and jealousy towards that person and towards God because our sense of justice hasn't been upheld.

[24 : 55] older brothers think that we've made it on our own goodness. We don't recognize the fact that we need Christ. Older brothers hate grace because grace gives to other people what they don't deserve and grace makes us admit that we're not really as good as we'd like the world around us to think that we are.

Older brothers want control. They want to be in leadership positions. They want people to see how good they really are and sometimes older brothers are more concerned about being in positions of leadership than about living lives that follow Christ.

I think the summary of it is older brothers are okay not becoming more like Christ as long as they can convince the world around them that they really are. Older brothers are okay being stuck in their sin as long as they can put this mask on for the world around them that says that they're not.

Older brothers are willing to sacrifice a relationship with Christ in order to appear to the world around them to have life all together. And as we look at the big brother we see that his situation is bad.

His situation is desperate. He is separated from his father. He is separated from his family. He doesn't understand his relationship to them but when we get a clearer understanding of the story we actually see that his situation is even worse than it first appeared.

[26 : 33] See the older brother doesn't really come into this story until the second half of the story. Jesus starts the story and says there's a man who had two sons.

The younger one comes to him and we know that there's a second son but we don't hear anything about him until the story is halfway over. And that's sort of odd.

And as we look at the context of what's going on here in the stories we see the first story of lost and found that Jesus tells involves a lost sheep and when the sheep gets lost someone goes out to look for it.

The second story is a lost coin and when the coin gets lost someone goes to look for it and in each of these stories there's someone who obviously is supposed to be looking for it. There's a shepherd who is responsible for the sheep and the shepherd is the one who goes to find the lost sheep.

There's a woman who owns the coins and when they get lost she is the one who goes and looks for the lost coin. But I think culturally we lose out on the fact that someone was also supposed to go look for this lost brother.

[27 : 40] When Jesus starts the story by saying there was a man who had two sons his audience would have automatically thought of another two sons. They were Cain and Abel.

For those of you who don't know Cain was Abel's older brother. They brought sacrifices to God. God accepted Abel's he didn't accept Cain's and Cain was angry with his brother and killed him. God comes to Cain and he says Cain where's your brother?

And Cain says am I my brother's keeper? Am I responsible for taking care of him? And God basically says yes you are and I know that you killed him. And so as Jesus' audience hears Jesus say this intro line there's a man who had two sons.

They would have been reminded of Cain and Abel. They would have been reminded of this thing that God says to Cain that he is responsible for his younger brother. And when the younger brother goes away they would have expected that the older brother's duty as a son would be to go and look for his younger brother.

And the older brother's absence from the first half of this story tells us that he did not do that. He stayed at home. He was industrious. He was productive.

[28 : 53] He was earning money for the family. He was so focused on being a slave and doing his duty of being a slave well that he missed out on doing his duty as a son and as a brother.

And the thing is in the first two stories the thing that was lost was way less valuable than a person. But the people thought that it was of such value that they went and looked for the sheep.

They looked for the coin. And here the brother doesn't understand the value of his younger brother. He understands the value of money. He understands the value of getting in the good crop for his father.

He doesn't understand the value of a human being. And so rather than going out and searching for this brother who was lost he stays. He works on building up the bank account that one day is going to be his.

And Jesus tells this story. He tells of this horrible older brother who doesn't understand his duty as an older brother. And he shows this brother failing so miserably. And as he does this he puts this longing in us.

[30 : 01] He puts this desire for a brother who will do things right. Who will go out and search for the younger one when he is lost.

Who will celebrate when he comes home. Who will understand yes it will cost me I will be less productive I will have to share more of the family fortune with him but ultimately it is worth it to bring my brother home.

And the way that this older brother in this story fails to do this just creates this longing in us for an older brother who will.

And the older brother that this story is ultimately pointing to is Jesus. Because the Bible says that all of us whether we have the tendencies of an older brother to try and perfectly obey and make it on our own or whether we're like the younger brother who goes off and goes astray and parties it up and lives the wild life.

That ultimately all of us are sinners. All of us have gone far away from God our Father. That all of us have become separated from home.

[31 : 09] That all of us need an older brother to come out to search for us in a far off land. That we need an older brother who is willing to bring us back to the Father at great cost to himself.

And in Jesus we have that. We have an older brother who came down to the earth, left the comforts of heaven and came to this far off land, humbled himself to becoming a slave, perfectly obeyed God his entire life and then humbled himself to the point of death on a cross.

He paid the ultimate price, his own life, to bring us back to the Father because he is our perfect older brother. father. And as Jesus tells this story, he points to himself.

And he ends the story without an ending. The father is out in the field with the older brother. The father invites the older brother into the party and we don't get an answer.

We don't know whether the older brother went back or not. The reason he did this is because the crowd that he was talking to was made up of religious leaders. He was talking to older brothers.

[32 : 24] He was talking to the people in Israel who had done everything right their entire lives. He was talking to the guys who had books to interpret the Old Testament law that added on all these barriers to keep them from breaking these rules and commandments and who thought that they had made it through their own goodness.

And because they thought that they had made it through their own goodness they looked down on the others who hadn't. They looked down on the fact that Jesus would love tax collectors and sinners and prostitutes.

And Jesus basically says hey I'm here to save. I'm here to bring you back to the father. These ones who went astray who messed up they recognize that they've come back and were celebrating and now the invitation is for you.

Will you come? And he leaves the story without an ending because he wants them to write their own ending to the story. He leaves them with a question will you come in and join the party join the celebration celebrate the fact that God is working that God is saving or will you continue to rely on your own goodness continue to trust in yourself for salvation.

as we're here today the story still doesn't have an ending. Ultimately the ending of this story is for each of us.

[33 : 52] Will we look at our good deeds and trust in our ability to obey as slaves in order to make us good enough to be accepted by the father?

or will we recognize that it's not our obedience that's needed that Christ has already been our perfect obedience that we have failed that we have messed up and that we need our perfect older brother to bring us back to the father and will we trust in that and go with him back to the celebration with our father?

let's pray dear father we thank you for today for this chance to come together as your people to look at your word to celebrate the fact that we have a perfect older brother who has come to bring us back to you who has come at a great cost to himself to a far off land has paid the ultimate price to give us a new relationship with you our father God I pray that each of us would examine our hearts would look for the places where we have followed and resembled the older brother and trusted in our obedience as a form of rebelling against you forgive us for those times let us recognize that through you we are sons and daughters not slaves let us recognize that through you we are accepted because of Jesus and not because of our obedience and that ultimately what you desire from us is our love and not our slavery thank you for your love for us in Jesus name amen amen can I hear amen to that thanks Eric for sharing God's words really good hey if you we don't want you to leave here if you have something on your heart you want to share with somebody have somebody pray for you so we have people who we've been training up as prayer leaders to pray for you it's all confidential they'll be up here in the front actually right afterwards there's a training time for people who are interested in being part of the prayer team and what that entails and it'll be right out these doors in a room right across the hall so if you are interested in that please join that because we we are a church that we realize how much we need to pray continually as God has placed us here in this community also as you walk out on the door there's a table there and on the left hand side of the table there's a sign up sheet for the choir we're going to start a Christmas choir that we've done every Christmas it's been an amazing and encouraging time as a church and so if you would like to sign up for that please sign your name down there

I see Ed and Edward in the back talking and so Ed and Edward are going to be there I know they're going to sing right away I'm giving you guys a hard time but anybody anybody my wife will join too right?

No yeah you don't want me I'm just testing you right out but if you're interested please sign up it is a huge blessing we're going to start practice next Sunday so you'll get your name and you'll send out emails for all that also in your bulletin there's like four things just look at your bulletin there's a couple things in there one of the things is just basically we're going to I put in there a gorilla series we want to do some sermon series on things that are the gorillas in your life and what I mean by gorillas are you know you're eating table and there's this gorilla there and they're eating food and you know there's something you want to talk about to your friends but you have this fear that if you mention the gorilla something bad is going to happen right and so often when I mention the gorilla I feel like I get my arms ripped off and people beat me to death with whatever we're talking about so we want to talk about those things as a church and if there's any things or issues that you want to talk about in sermons there's a number there it's a brand new number text any question that you have there and we want to work those into a sermon series and try to figure out how ways we can approach people that we're talking to also next Sunday we are not going to be here we're going to be in Cyberport okay so but we're not sure where we're going to be in Cyberport okay we have one place we're praying about a second place and it's been as a staff team it's been we've been praying more than just about anything

[38 : 06] I think most of us always pray about our next house and where we're going to get kicked out and those type of things and so we need you we need you to go on the website and check that front page because we'll place on there immediately where we're going to be but we're going to be at Cyberport possibility is the theater but we're looking at even a neater location for that so you promise me this is your thing you have to do this week you will look on the website and you will find out where we are next week okay okay also in the bulletin about three down we have a really neat opportunity we're working with some guys and they're basically reaching out to about 500 refugees that live in our area and so again we feel like God has placed us as a church in this area to impact this area we've been doing outreaches nursing homes cleaning the beaches all these other things but it's a really neat opportunity for this holiday season they've listed some things in there that they need they need clothing there's all ages there's families there's little kids they need diapers and so next week we want to start collecting those things so if you pick up some old clothes or jackets cold weather things please bring them to church and we will take those from you and we promise that those will get into people's hands who need them okay so we want to be about meeting needs so that's what we want to do so next week we're going to start collecting all those things they're in the bulletin and they'll be on the website and on the city too if you're not on the city you need to get on that because that's how we communicate as a church again if you don't what is the city come talk to me and we'll sign you up it's kind of like our church Facebook okay let me pray for us as we think about what we just heard we're talking about on a journey we're talking about lost things we've talked about lost sheep and lost coins and now we're talking about lost sons and daughters in all these stories there's someone who goes out to search we've talked a lot the last three times about redemption redemption is about being found by God but it's not about just being found by God because we're dead we can't find ourselves but it's being about found by God and wanting to be found in this story today you had two brothers who were lost one wanted to be found one did not

Father we just thank you for this day we thank you for your son who is the hero of the story we thank you that he always shows up he's always there sometimes we don't feel like he's there but he's the hero he's always there and we can trust him we thank you that on a journey you're trying to take our focus off of ourselves and take us out of the center of our story and you're trying to put yourself in the center where you should be because you're God and we're not so we thank you for your son who is a true older brother who left incredible comfort in heaven to come down and sacrifice many many things and ultimately his life to show us what a true older brother should look like Father as we look at him today and as we just marvel at how gracious and merciful you are help us just to be overwhelmed with your goodness and your mercy help us to come to you as brothers and sisters and sons and daughters and not as slaves and to realize that you are amazing and as we contemplate that and as we live that and as we confess when we fall short and we repent of our sin and our selfishness we pray that you would show us people in our world that we need to also share this message to because you left us here not just so we can be slaves but you left us here to be sons and daughters to point other people to the hero of our story the hero who always shows up your son Jesus so Lord as a church we just worship you we thank you for all these provisions and all these friends we pray all these things in your amazing name because we love you amen thank you guys next week cyberport check the website have a great week