

21st July 2024

VIBE
The

Message: The Parable of The Two Lost Sons

with David Wright

Scriptures: Luke 15:1-2 and Luke 15:11-32 NIV

Jesus associated with pimps and prostitutes, tax collectors and the downcast. He ate with sinners and was despised by the teachers of the law, the Pharisees and the 'good' respectable people of the day who had privilege, money and power to lose if they were to follow Jesus' and his teaching.

Time after time Jesus said that the Repentant Sinners are IN and the Proud and Self-righteous are OUT.

The parable of the lost son tells us that God loves us so much that he is waiting anxiously, with open arms ready to forgive and forget our foolish self-centred desires and behaviour, to bring us in, to the celebration he has waiting for us when we recognise that we have tried to live life our way, and that our way leads to disaster. That what we think will make us happy will eventually leave us dissatisfied, frustrated, lost and broken.



The amazing thing about this parable is that it shows us:

- Two ways we can say NO to God;
- Two ways we can fall into sin against God; and
- Two ways we can be lost.

One is glaringly obvious, while the other is so subtle it is barely recognised by those who have fallen into it.

Not surprisingly then, one leads to the open arms of God's forgiveness, while the other leads to anger and resentment against God.

It all comes down to this; you cannot earn your salvation. It does not matter what your sin is, Jesus died on Calvary to clear your name. If you recognise yourself as a sinner, you repent and ask God for forgiveness, and you then live a life that is a response to that incredible gift, you are IN.

BUT, if you think you are a pretty 'good' person, maybe not perfect but not that bad, and therefore God owes you something because of your goodness, you are so far from his open arms you may never find them!

~ David Wright ~

A Harvest For The Kingdom

I am sure you have noticed the seasonal changes a rural landscape can offer.

At planting time, the ground is prepared, and the seed is planted. The plants will be tended with care and soil nourishment considered. Then, with the right weather conditions comes the miracle of growth and, ultimately, the often-feverish activity of harvest. It's a cycle that has been repeated innumerable times throughout history. Even so, to reflect on that cycle can be helpful because there is a fascinating mystery involved.



Jesus used the image of the mustard seed and the amazing fact that from a tiny seed, something quite large and magnificent can grow. For those of us who may not see ourselves as people of great faith, the mustard seed of faith represents great hope. As we let ourselves become personally involved, it will lead to an investment of ideas and dreams. Some of our most familiar institutions began as an idea in someone's mind. We could mention the Flying Doctor Service, Lifeline, or other areas of life where someone saw a need and dared to begin to fill it.

At another level, we might hear echoes of that famous sermon of Martin Luther King Jr, 'I have a dream' What a dream it was, and what an impact it had on racially divided America. In the social issues we face today, we need people who have caught that kind of vision of the Kingdom of God and who have a dream of a more just and peaceful world. If we have a dream for our church and society and what, under God, we might become, then we are invited to invest it to sow the seed. It may or may not come to pass in the fullness of time. But if we are defeated before we even begin, the outcome is predictable.

Let's invest our money in the Kingdom of God. We're all reasonably familiar with that idea in the world of finance and business, and in our own money management, we seek reasonable returns on our investments. Similarly, our financial stewardship—our gift of money to God through the church—is an investment in the Kingdom of God and in values that cannot be measured by the world's scale.

As Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how". There is a mystery about growth. How does a plant grow, or a child? How does a church grow? We are reminded of our helplessness; in spite of all our cleverness, we can discover things or rearrange them, but we can't create them because God retains the secret of life. Our task is to cooperate with God in that process of creation.

From a tiny seed, a mustard tree will grow, and eventually, birds will nest in its branches. So also from a tiny seed of true faith, the church itself will grow and provide shelter and a home for a wide range of God's people. As the hymn writer put it, "See how great a flame aspires, kindled by a spark of grace".

Rev. Dr Clive W Ayre (from Old Synod website)



Gympie Next Sunday ... We look forward to a message from Rev. David Fanning.

Gympie Kitchen Refurbishment

Today is the deadline for discussing your ideas and suggestions with David Wright (after this morning's service).

Christmas Shoeboxes July Collections

This month we're collecting '**Something Special**'. Nothing too big as they'll need to fit into shoebox-size gift packs. e.g. soft toys, plastic animals, purse/wallet/small bags, stickers, bangles, necklaces, small puzzles, hair ribbons/clips, sunglasses.

Call to Prayer for Uniting 4570

Wherever you may be at **7.30pm of a Friday** (or at a time that better suits you), we ask that you continue to pray for our next ministerial appointment - someone who will share our vision and plans; and for those coming to deliver messages in the interim. Please also keep Orrell and Christine in your prayers as they wait to hear what God has planned for them in this next season.

Shine Women's Gympie Conference

Saturday 3rd August from **9am to 3pm** at the Stan Baker Hall, 1 College Rd, Southside. The theme is 'Forever Free'. There'll be, teachings three guest speakers, a market, morning tea and lunch. The cost is \$40. Register www.shinewomen.com.au.

Oriana Choir

'Reflections' songs of LOVE and HOPE ... **Saturday 17th August, 2pm**, St Patrick's Church, Gympie. Tickets from oriana.org.au

Church UNITY comes from Corporate HUMILITY
(Leonard Ravenhill)

- * **Uniting 4570 Prayer Warriors** - 8am, Tuesday mornings, CE room
- * **Local Churches at Prayer** - Tuesday, 23rd July, 6pm, Gympie Church of Christ
- * **Hymn-Fest** - in the Springtime, details to come.

Our Name, Our Calling.

"Holy Father, keep them safe by the power of your name. It is the name you gave me. Keep them safe so they can be one, just as you and I are one."
(John 17.11 NIRV).



UNITING 4570
Better together

These words were spoken by Jesus the night before He died, as He prayed for us to His Heavenly Father (John 17). Five times He expressed His desire for our unity – not only a unity of the original apostles – but also of all who have followed in their footsteps, generation by generation.

Our Church

Our primary purpose is to fulfil our calling ...

The calling of exhibiting the character of Jesus, a spirit of humility, love, and unity, coupled with resurrection power, proving that the church is truly 'The Body of Christ' inhabited by God Himself!

~ from Uniting 4570's Operational Guidelines ~

Worship

Worship Services... **Gympie:** 15 Red Hill Road - 9am + Kidz Church (school term)
Imbil: 3 Elizabeth Street - 9am

Live-streaming... Sunday messages are usually livestreamed to facebook & YouTube; look up 'Gympie Regional Uniting Church'

Contact Us

Church Office... M: 0493 442 250 P: (07) 5482 2985 E: cherylie@gruc.org
www.gruc.org.au F: www.facebook.com/guchurch

Office Hours... Mon & Wed 8.30am-12pm; Tue 9.30am-3pm; Thu 8.30am-3pm

Pastoral Care... Please contact the office by phone or email.

- Need the services of a Justice of The Peace? ... Glenda 0418 187 698
- Need help with your computer? ... Mike 0403 271 413
- Need a lift to church? ... Jill 0421 333 538
- Need prayer? ... call the church office 0493 442 250

Offering & Attendance Last Week

Attendance: Adults 78 ♦ Children 9 ♦ Facebook 69 ♦ Youtube 13

Total Week's Offering: \$ 2,148.20 ... Budgeted Offerings per week is \$3,270.00.

Tithes & Offerings by Bank Transfer: Westpac BSB 034 127 Acct: 29 4101

(Please identify your bank transaction as either 'Tithe' or 'Offering', Thank you)