

[00:00:00] Speaker A: Welcome to the Hope Church Glasgow Sunday podcast. We pray you encounter God's love afresh today. Find out more about us@hopechurchglasgow.org or find us on Facebook and Instagram. Now, please enjoy this week's podcast.

[00:00:17] Speaker B: Actually, do you want celebrating? Where we're getting to with our special offering is exactly where I want to go with this morning.

And we are on the story on the journey of walking our way through Luke. And and I've got the great joy of talking about Luke, which Luke 15, which you'll be really familiar with the three parables. And we talk about the lost sheep and the lost coin and the lost son. But actually really the theme in this story is all about celebration and joy. So I've titled this Heavenly Party and you're the one invited. You can decide which one of these three guys you are or if you're the person that's trying to sneak away in the background. If you're really socially awkward, you might be one of those. And one of the things I've really enjoyed about this series of Luke is the fact that lots of different people have been teaching on it and joining in and they've been using like their expertise and different things. Steve, you talked about like the structure, structural engineering. I remember your gifts of buildings falling down into the rivers. Tim used his crazy weird physics knowledge that still I can't quite get my head around in teaching and I want to do exactly the same. And as John says, I'm a teacher.

I'm a guy guidance or pastoral teacher at the minute, but my subject really is biology and I absolutely love my job. And one of the reasons I love my job is because I get to see kids grow in their knowledge and their understanding of something and grow as human beings as well. And that's something I'm really, really passionate about. That's why I get into pastoral teaching because I just want to see these guys become better people.

And in my subject in particular, my goal is to help them with their knowledge of, of really complex things, things that have been like studied over thousands and thousands of years. Right. And people have spent decades and decades of their life putting research into and trying to communicate. Communicate that it's like mind boggling stuff right into a 50 minute lesson that teenagers can engage with and understand and try and get their head around.

And that can be a real challenge, but it can also be a real joy.

And actually in biology it's often taking something that's from an unseen world. So it might be things on a microscopic Or a molecular level, or things that are going on inside your body that you can't see and trying to communicate, look, this is what's happening and give you some understanding of that. But it can also be like looking at ecosystems and things that are massive, that you still can't comprehend and trying to squish that into your brain and make sure you understand what's going on.

That's my job and I really love it. And it is challenging.

And I try and put things in place to try and help pupils understand stuff. And we call it scaffolding in the teaching world, don't we? Like, if you're a teacher, you can nod to me about this. I'm going to make quite a few teaching references today. So if you are a teacher, you can nod away. Go, Yes, I get that. That's wonderful, great.

But we call it scaffolding. We put things in place to try and help you understand something that is really complicated.

And that's what Jesus does. In this topic that we're going to look at on this chapter that we're going to look at now, I'm going to get your brains working to start with, because one of the

games I love to play with my kids at school is what is it? As we just call it, what is it? And it's stuff that you put on under a microscope. It's everyday objects and you have to guess what it is. So feel free to shout out if you think you know what this is. Any ideas what that is? Try and ignore the colors. The colors always are funny. Who was that?

Velcro. It's Velcro. Well done. Any idea what this might.

The cake. Oh, am I steady?

What's the next one? Oh. Anyone know what this is?

Tim, what did you say it is actually? Hair. Right. That is a beard, right? This is really gross. It's a beard hair that's been trimmed with a razor. So it's super, super sharp and super clear. That's what your beard hair. We're not ladies. Not yours? No. Sorry, Jan.

I could get gross. I was going to describe one of my lessons I do about the digestive system and that gets really gross. I have a class of kids that go, we make poo. It really is what we do. Right? It's a short version of that next one. Anyone know what that might be?

Paper.

Thanks, you're close. That's a particular type of paper.

No, but you've got the next one already. You can see into the future, I think here already. Simon, that is a postage stamp. Obviously. Come on. Cannot tell by the shape. That's a postage stamp.

You've already got this one, Simon. That's your toilet paper.

It's not dirty toilet paper. It's not unused. It's two ply toilet paper, just to be sure.

And then the final one there. Anyone know what this is?

Sorry, I shouldn't laugh. I don't do that with kids. I don't laugh at them when they get it wrong. Sorry, Joe, it's a great guest. Well done. Thanks for contributing to the class.

Any other ideas?

Oh, a match. It is an unstruck match.

There you go. Mind blown already. There you go. Can I sit down and lesson finished.

Jan said to me, right, this is one thing I love about you guys, Andy, you could stand here and say nothing and everyone would love you.

That's nice, I might do that, but I'm not.

Now, the Beauty of Luke 15 is that it's all about teaching, right? It's all about another version of Jesus's teaching, taking mind boggling content of what's going on in heaven and trying to put it into the mind of, in this context, the Pharisees and the people that he's with. And he's hanging around and he uses a whole load of scaffolding for this. And I'll keep referring to that word as we go through as a bit of a context at this point. Jesus has been wandering around for the last few chapters with people constantly following him. Some of them are people whose lives he is changing as he goes. He's healing them, he's transformed them, he's delivering them from this,

that and the other others are leaders who are kind of following him, thinking what on earth is going on?

And they can't quite get their head around what he's doing. Some of these people are over the moon because he's breaking the trend of what a religious leader is doing and he's transforming lives and he's doing it in a way that people haven't seen before.

Other leaders, religious leaders at this point are going, hang on, he's doing something very different to what we're doing. And the heat starts to rise against Jesus. And this is the Pharisees at this point trying to actively look for reasons to arrest him. So they're challenging him on this, they're challenging him on that and trying to get him to a place where he's going to say something that he shouldn't and get arrested.

And whilst he's hanging out with the crowds and hosting them and generally partying with People, if you're eating people with people, you're partying with them. That's what Jesus is doing. And he was in the homes of the Pharisees. He was. The Pharisees at these points are the, like, well educated, educated people. They were the teachers of the law. They understood the Mosaic Law inside out.

And they are the ones questioning Jesus at this point. Why are you hanging out with notorious sinners, ruffians, tax collectors who were explicitly corrupt? And they start muttering to themselves. And Jesus is here in the muttering, or notices the muttering or just knows that the muttering's happening. But, like, why is this guy hanging out with all these sinners?

See, these Pharisees, they do have a lot of wisdom. They do. They have a lot of earthly wisdom. They know the Lord Jesus even commends it. Back in Mark 12:34, one of the Pharisees agrees with Jesus, says, look, there is only one God, and to love him with all your heart and to love your neighbor as you love yourself, they are the greatest commandments.

And Jesus says to them, you're not far from the kingdom of God. That's the words he used. You're not far from the kingdom of God. There's something about their earthly wisdom which is really important, but there is something else beyond that, which these guys just could not grasp and could not understand about the very nature of God.

And he had to find a way of helping them understand. He had to be this outstanding teacher.

And this time, instead of showing them who God is through the miracles.

One thing that I do in science is I love to blow stuff up. I love burning stuff. I love cutting stuff up. I love. I like making practical things in the classroom that kids can really see and go, all right, I can imagine that. And I can see that on a bigger scale. Jesus has been doing that a lot. He's been doing miracles that people can see. They can see the power of what God has. He's been healing people in front of them. They like the practical experiments. But in this situation here, he changes tack a little bit and comes at it from a different angle. And he uses stories or parables.

So now, as a teacher, I'm going to teach you something about teaching that Jesus taught the teachers of the time and those that needed teaching.

And it is about. It's actually very, very famous. If you're a teacher, come on, you must know who this guy is.

Anyone able to tell me who that is? No, I don't think you would. This is the very well known in the teacher world. Soviet Union Psychiatrist, psychologist, expert on child development.

Lev Vygotsky.

See, Tim's already chuckling away. He's like, I know where this is going Now. Lev Vygotsky was a great educator. He understood how children's minds work. And he came up with one theory, which is what Jesus is using in this chapter, Luke 15, which is Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

There you go. Even in biology, we can use complicated terms, and it is really just a very basic and very simple way of teaching.

And there's three levels to it. And really, we start with, what is our current understanding?

This is the stuff that you can get quite comfortably.

All right, if I was teaching about the respiration system, children know that you breathe, and breathing keeps you alive. That's a very easy and simple thing for people to understand.

But they might not understand the dynamics of how that happens. So I've got to stretch them a little bit. And what we're trying to do as teachers is, is getting from this place where it's current understanding, the stuff that you know without any help, to the next bit, that zone of proximal development, which is where they stretch.

Now, there's two things you need for this type of teaching to work really well. One of them is scaffolding. So you need something around it to help them understand and make sure that the bricks don't fall apart and their understanding doesn't fall apart. Okay? That might be practical experiments like Jesus is doing with the miracles. In this case, it's storytelling. And the second thing you need is a more knowledgeable other, someone who can teach that stuff and stretch you to the stuff that is out of reach for you yourself. So you need those two things, and that's what Jesus is doing here. Now, the current understanding of the Pharisees is that of the Mosaic Law. It's fairly easy to understand. It's fairly easy to pass on from one person to another. It's a list of rules like do not murder. Do not steal, what you can, what you can't eat, what you do on the Sabbath.

That's fairly easy for these Pharisees to understand and to get.

But what's out of reach for them is what's going on with God and what his heart is for them and what they can experience through him and his heart, in this case in particular, for the lost as we look through the stories. So Jesus needs to put scaffolding and relatable context around it, and he uses these things called parables. And parables comes from the Greek word parable, or words para and bole. I think that's how you say it. I'm just going to call it bolay because it sounds like a cooler way. Para, bole.

From now on, when you hear the word parables, I'm hoping you'd all go para, ballet, bole.

Or if I'm from London, I'm probably looking at just going bow.

Bow means to throw, to put something around. And para means besides or around. And this is what this story is about. It's putting the story in. It's put in a context around something that is really difficult to understand, but a very relatable context.

The three stories that we see in this chapter are all very simple, really, for these people to understand their relatable context and things that they can get.

So we have the three stories. We've got all of them about things that have been lost. And then I've put in capitals here and then found. Because that's really the important part of this story. Things have been lost, but then they are found.

Two of them are objects.

The sheep.

Can I call a sheep an object? I can. It's not really a person. Yeah, I'm going to call it an object, a sheep and a coin, and those things get lost. Whereas the third story is about different characters and the emotions that go around in that. And you can relate to the three different characters in slightly different ways.

Essentially, those first two stories are kind of Jesus saying, do you get this right? This is fairly simple. Do you understand this little section? And in the third one, he's stretching them to that stuff that's out of reach. That's where he becomes this amazing teacher. So we're going to read it bit by bit. So if you've got your Bibles, I'm actually going to be one of those terrible people who uses my Bible on my phone. Terrible judgy people who uses my Bible on my phone. Wants to check my social media, right? I'm going to read verse four to seven. This is the parable of the lost sheep. And it says, in fact, I've got it up here as well.

Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the 99 in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. He calls his friends and neighbors together and says, rejoice with me, I found my lost sheep. I tell you in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven, one sinner who repents than over 99 persons who do not need to repent.

So it's a very simple story. It's a very simple context for these guys to get right. A sheep has been lost. The shepherd desperately wants to find him. They find him and then they party. There was nothing particularly special about this one sheep. It wasn't more important, talented, beautiful, precious than the other sheep. I don't think the only thing that was different about it was it was lost and it needed finding.

And when it wasn't lost anymore, the owner couldn't contain his joy and actually got a whole community to celebrate with him over this one sheep that has been found.

Now, I think the challenge here for the Pharisees is like, who are you in this picture? And I imagine a lot of the Pharisees like, well, I'm actually, you know, I'm the shepherd. I'm going after the lost. I'm going to find them. I think maybe the subtle challenge here is, are you maybe just one of the sheep who probably couldn't care less? I don't think those other 99 sheep knew that that one sheep was lost.

They were busy there chewing their grass and getting on with being sheep and not really aware of what's going on in the bigger picture. I think that's maybe the little challenge that God has put Jesus putting in there. That's that first story. It's fairly easy to get right. A sheep has been lost, it's been found. Everyone parties because his been found, the lost coin. So moving on from that to verse 8 and 10, or suppose a woman has 10 silver coins and she loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, rejoice with me. I found my lost coin. In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Again, the theme of that story is not the losing, it's the finding and the joy that comes with finding what's been lost. And again, the joy, the celebration of a community of people over one person's breakthrough.

And Jesus is saying to the people, you know joy, right? You know, the excitement of finding things that is, that have been lost. You especially know it when it's something that is really precious to you and you search and you search and you search to find it.

It's not really a difficult concept to get. We've all experienced that, haven't we. At some point we lost something.

We were with some friends yesterday and their eldest son, like, fell asleep upstairs and Mum went into like panic mode because she was like, I'm trying to bring him, I don't know where he is. And he gone. He actually fell asleep back in his sister's bed. But he was supposed to have. Well, and they were like, he could be anywhere. He could be. He's on the bus. He's fallen asleep on the bus. He's now in a ditch. And the panic started to set in. Whereas, like, the lad was fine. He was just sleeping upstairs, he didn't know. And when. When we found out where they were, there's a.

And that moment of joy and elation that he's not stuck on a bus or in a ditch or anything like that. He's. He was fine. He was just asleep in the bed upstairs.

You know, to lose something you've invested in, earned or been gifted is devastating. But when you find brings so much joy and brings so much joy to the Father when things return to him and again the community gather to celebrate that one person's joy.

So those are two very simple stories. The third story we're going to spend a bit more time on about the lost son. And this is Jesus stretching this understanding beyond what they can get on themselves because it involves people. It involves actually three key people.

So we're going to read it bit by bit.

And this is kind of God, Jesus putting a bit more scaffolding, challenging you a bit more about what the. God's, what God's heart is for us and his view on the lost and finding them.

It's really Jesus saying that knowing what I know about the Father, which is beyond your understanding, and knowing what I know about you, which you can't really see yet, here's a story that's going to challenge you a bit more. So we're going to read the first. We're going to read from verse 11. I'm just going to read the first little bit here. Verse 11 and 12. It says there was a man who had two sons.

The younger one said to the father, father, give me my share of the estate. So he divided the property between them. That's a very brief little section, but it tells you a lot, doesn't it, already? I think in the cultural context of this story, this is already mind blowing. This is already stretching the imagination.

This family clearly have some status, right? They've got some land.

We hear later that they've got their servants, They've got their fattened calves, they're ready to celebrate. They're a party family.

This is a big family with authority.

This son knew he was due in inheritance when his father passes away, but he's not prepared to wait for what he's been promised.

And that the Pharisees imagine as a listening to this are kind of reading between the lines going, this is like the story of Israel, isn't it? They're not. They're not prepared to wait for what has been promised to them.

And again, in the cultural context, asking for this inheritance from his father was essentially like saying to Father, I want you dead, right? I want to turn my back on you. You are nothing to me anymore.

I'm going to take what I've got and I'm going to go.

That's what he's saying to his dad, I want you dead. I want to take what I'm due, what I'm promised. I want to take it early and I want to go.

And then we go on to verse 13 to 16 and he says, not long after that the youngest son got together all he had set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

After he spent everything, there was severe famine in that whole country. So he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country who sent him to the fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

You see, what the son does is he takes his money and he runs. He runs from the land, he runs from his family and he runs from his community.

He runs from his whole identity of who he is.

And he puts his identity into something else which he then squanders quite significantly and quite quickly, doesn't he?

There's a challenge in there about identity, I think.

I think there's been times we probably can all relate to this. And I wasn't going to really talk about this, but I think it's important. There's probably times that we can all relate to losing our identity and turning our back on the things that the Father has for us and investing it in the things of the world or trying to invest it in the things of the world which quickly disappear.

And this is part of the challenge that Jesus is putting in here already. I think what is even more mind blowing than that in this story, and this tells you a lot about God, is that the Father takes this gut punch of a request from his son and just lets him have it without question.

There's not punishment, there's not rebuking.

The son asks for his money and the father gives it to him.

That blows the mind. To the people listening to it blows my mind actually thinking about this. It's a very simple statement where it just says, the father divided his son and divided his land and gave it to the son no more. Said he split the estate and he gives the son his part of what he's owed. He let that son make a free choice.

He gives him the freedom to make a choice. Instead of saying, nope, he could say, no, you're not having it, I'm not dead yet, you're not having it. But he lets him make that choice again. That's something we see throughout the Old Testament, isn't it? None more significant than in the Garden of Eden when we've got the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Jesus says, or God says to Adam and Eve, that's not for you. But he doesn't cordon it off and he doesn't put a barrier. Gives them the freedom to go in there and take if they want and if that's what they choose. It's a bit like that, isn't it? And then this story and this pattern happens all the way through Israel of here's what you're promised, but people trying to take it early and people trying to make their own decisions and having the freedom to make their own decisions, which really essentially just delays what they're promised.

Right? Going on from 14. Oh, no, I've done 14 to 16 already. It didn't take long. We've read 14 to 16. After we had spent everything, there was a severe famine in the land.

He went and hired himself out and ended up eating with the pigs.

It didn't take long for this guy to lose everything. He'd put his identity on all of his legacy, all of his identity. It was gone, it was squandered. He was reckless with what he had. He had been in a place of authority. He had this house that he was in with his dad and his brother and servants that he could tell what to do.

But he's found himself below those servants now. He's found himself below the farm hands in this new place that he's gone to. And even worse, he's found himself feeding the pigs and longing for the food that the pigs were eating. Again, the cultural context of that is not lost on the Pharisees, right?

Not only has this guy expressed desire for his father to be dead and turned his back on that. But now he's fallen to the lowest point. For a Jew to have anything to do with unclean pigs is bad enough, but be feeding them like even longing for their food was just completely unfathomable. Unfathomable. That's a good word, isn't it? There was essentially nothing left of this man.

He was below the very lowest point.

And I like Jon, as I was studying, this next little section really stuck out to me. So we're going to read 17 to 20, he said when he came back to his senses. I like that bit already.

He said, how many of my father's hired servants have food to spare? And here I am starving to death. I will go out back to my father and say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and sinned against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. So he got up and went to his father.

There was this point where the son was at his lowest point. He didn't recognize himself.

And it says when he came to his senses, really what I'm reading into that there was a glimpse of revelation, a distant experience or memory of the grace of his father.

And what. What type of man he is.

Do you mean he had. It came to him. He went, I know. I know what my dad's like, actually.

He'll see me come home.

And he was ready to do his repenting.

And he thought, like, just repenting and going back to my father will at least give me something to eat or a place to rest my head.

And then the next little section from verse 20. I just love that bit. Just when he came to his senses. That's the revelation, isn't it, that sometimes we need.

And it's important that you remember the promises you've been given.

Yeah. And that the Father, if he's promised something to you, it's coming.

Sometimes we can forget that and we can give up on dreams and we can give up on hopes and we can give up on the journey that we're on because we think I've just wasted it all. Do you want. But God's promises are God's promises.

You know what I mean? God's promises are God's promises.

And I declare right now, if you've got a promise that you think, man, that's well away, like that's done with, I just pray, like, restore that God, restore that. Would the faith be restored in that God? Would you remind people today of what their promises are and what good things you have for him.

So verse 20.

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him and ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The son said to him, father, I've sinned against heaven. I've sinned against you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.

I like here how the Father doesn't even like.

He just totally ignores that. It doesn't even go, it's okay.

But the father said to the servants, quick, bring the robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet, right? The aim first is to, like, just restore his identity, right? That's the first goal here, restoring this guy's identity. Not even like, oh, that's okay, yeah, that was a silly thing to do. None of that. It was just straight into bring the robe, put it on him, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate. I love that the Father was not inactive in all of this.

He was quite literally on the lookout.

His eyes were on the wilderness as he stood quite literally in the promised land, right? The estate that was promised to this son of his. And he was waiting for him to return. And as soon as he saw him, he. His heart was filled with compassion and the only thought on his mind was restoration and then celebrating. I love that. Isn't that so good? The Father's only. Only thing is not right. Okay, well, that was silly. That was bad of you. Yeah, let's try and do better next time. It was, let's restore your identity and let's party that you're back.

And that tells you so much about the heart of the Father, isn't it? The son says the things he

wants to say. He says, father, I've sinned against heaven. I've sinned against you.

But the Father saw the full act of repentance to turn his back on the wilderness and move towards him.

And he ran towards the Son, which I imagine is not an easy thing to do. If you ever tried running in flip flops, it's not the easiest or most dignified thing to do. This guy's probably wearing a robe himself. I've not run in flip flops and wore a skirt or a robe at the same point. You'll be glad to know But I imagine it's quite tricky, actually. I won't do that again. That's impossible. Embarrassing. That was a little tickle.

I mean, you could probably just imagine the jaws of the servants hitting the floor as this guy goes running out to rescue or to go and restore the identity of this son who's turned his back on him. You see, Jesus is expressing something to the people that they just couldn't understand at time. It's no matter how far you fall, how many bad choices you make, which go against the cultural expectations or the. The Mosaic law in this case, or social experiences like his grace and his compassion for you never diminishes.

In fact, it grows and it grows until the lost return.

Now they're questioning why Jesus is interacting and welcoming sinners into this place. And this is Jesus saying, well, because I want them to be restored. I want them to have their identity back. I want to party the that they have been found and are not lost anymore. He's seeing what's on the inside. And he's been restoring people like this for the last few years since his baptism, has been restoring the lives of people, sparking party after party in heaven.

The clear message of this. I'm looking for the lost because I love him, so should you be.

And that leads us on to the other son, which is a really important character in this story. And I think this is probably the most challenging one for the Pharisees that we've got here. And so he's not just telling this story to highlight those who are lost. It's actually a call to action as partners with him in the Great Commission.

That's what this part of the story is about.

Yes, to have a heart for the lost, to look out for, to seek and to rejoice in finding them.

So when the youngest son returns, in fact, we're going to read verse 25 to 32. So I keep jumping backwards and forwards into here, but I'm sure you can keep up.

25. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came to the house, he. He heard music and dancing. I love that there's a party going on already. He's on his way from the field. He can hear it from a way off.

So he called one of the servants and asked, what's going on? Your brother has come home, he replied, and your father has killed the fattened calf. Because he has him back safe and sound. The servant gets it. He's already excited about this party.

The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his Father went out and pleaded with him, but he answered his father, look, all these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat that I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him.

My son, the father says, you are always with me and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found when the younger son returns. You probably wouldn't even blame the servants to the house being like, really now I've got to kill a fattened calf, now I've got to set up the tent, now I've got to organize this, now I've got to do this. All for someone who turned their back on us. But actually they joined in the celebrations. There's excitement there about what's happening in the house and, and the restoration that's happening in that house.

Looking outward was something out with the comprehension of these Pharisees. In their mind they had their place in heaven and they were keeping the laws and they were passing laws onto the other and that was their safety place. They were looking at what their own land was doing.

Just like the brother who was in the field doing his jobs. His identity was in the chores that he was doing, wasn't it?

To make sure that his part of the inheritance was as profitable as it can be.

He was stewarding well what was given to him. There's nothing wrong with that. Actually, he's stewarding the land that's been given to him that's been promised him by his father. He's trying to make it as profitable as possible.

But instead of being delighted to see his younger brother joining the joy, he is filled with anger, he's filled with frustration, he's filled with hatred because he's doing what he should be doing and his brother hasn't. He lived appropriately by the law and the cultural expectation where his brother turned his back on that and yet has still been restored to a position where he now has a share in what's left of that estate. So he refuses to party. He chooses this important thing. He chooses to be angry, chooses to be sad and bitter and inward looking.

The father pleads with his son. He wants him to be part of this community celebration.

He wants him there.

But the older brother doesn't only see. He calls out the wickedness of his Brother, and this is interesting, this bit here, because he says, I have been slaving for you.

That's a total misconception of what's going on here already, isn't it? I've been slaving for you. The reality is the father had divided up that land already.

That older son had his land. This was actually, this was a partnership that he was in with his father.

It wasn't his father's land that he was working for. It was a partnership. It was shared out already between them. It was his.

The father's given that part of the land to the younger son. The older son has. We heard that at the start it was divided equally. This is a partnership that the son just totally misses.

And the unsaid question to the Pharisees really is, why don't you invite and welcome and care for the lost? Why have you got such a self centered view of the kingdom of God?

Why are you only nurturing what is yours and you're doing a great job with what's there and the laws and the stuff that's there when you could be sending the shoots of God's love and you

could be looking out at the landscape that is changing around you, not just your own allotment.

So these parables, they provide the cultural and the practical scaffolding for a deeper understanding of God's love. That's what's happening here. This is an excellent lesson by Jesus, taking them from a place where they can understand the very simple mosaic laws that are passed on that you can memorize without much assistance and stretching them into the deeper knowledge of who God is and what he wants for people and to celebrate with all our energy. When that happens. This is where I want to land because I love celebrating.

I used to think I was a total introvert, but actually I'm not. I love partying and love seeing people. I don't do it enough.

Reality is, I could be very British about celebrating other people's wins.

Anyone else know like anyone else feel like that? Right. I can be dismissive, I can be pessimistic. I'm often jealous. That's probably what causes it.

That could be my attitude to other people's wins. Whereas actually I want to try and develop a culture in myself and the people around me of celebration. One thing we do great in our small group is we make sure we talk about other people's wins in that week. And it can be little things. We've got loads of teenagers in our group and they talk about, oh, nothing's gone well, this week science was rubbish.

You know, I get a idk. That's what they say, isn't it? All the time. What's gone well for you this week? Teenagers. Idk. Which means. I don't know if you're. A little bit of street chat for you there, but they're getting around that because we. We make this a habit in our small group of saying, what has gone well? What is your wins? And when we hear wins, we celebrate and we whoop and we cheer and we join and I'm loving getting better at that. I was rubbish at that before. My only other context, and this is a bit depressed, isn't it? My only other context was sort of community celebration is football. I love my football. Right, Wednesday night, this is. I'm going to tell you embarrassing story about Wednesday night. I watched Newcastle beat man's Man United, right? We only had 10 men as well. We had a man sent off, right? I was sat there, oh, sorry, Tim, you're a Man United supporter. Oh, well, that.

This is a challenge for you, Tim, to join in my celebration right now.

Joining my win, right?

We were playing all right, and then in the last minute we scored a goal. And I was sat in the lounge on my own. And St. James's park, the stadium erupted and it was like I was there. I stood up and I cheered. I had to apologize to my daughter for waking her up because I was clap. I stood and clapped. This is sad, isn't it? I stood and clapped on my own in the lounge. Newcastle scoring a goal.

I felt like I was part of that community and I was joining in the celebration of 55,000 other Geordies that were in the stadium at the point, at that time in the celebration. That's my context. It changed yesterday, right, Because Newcastle lost last night. So well done to Man City. I'm over the moon for you. Come on, Man City. Love you. Celebrate. I'm glad you won. But the challenge is there to join the celebration of others, isn't it? That's kind of where I want to land today. And there's a few questions really I want to think of. Sorry, I'm kind of running out of time here.

There's a couple of questions I really want to challenge you with. And one of them is about

celebration.

Are you good at celebrating the wins of others? Are you good at celebrating together when there is breakthrough?

Are you good at seeing the breakthrough? That's nothing, isn't it? The father was looking for breakthrough. He was looking for the lost to return and he was celebrating when that happened. So those two things are you looking for breakthrough?

Are you looking for the lost?

And are you celebrating with others? And are you celebrating together when that breakthrough happens?

This section here is all about Jesus teaching the joy of heaven. We can often think it's like things have been lost. It sounds very sad. The lost coin, lost sheep, lost son. It's actually about joy. It's actually about partying together.

And that's kind of where I want to leave it, that challenge to celebrate what has been lost and then been found again.

[00:36:55] Speaker A: Thank you for listening to this podcast from Hope Church Glasgow. There are loads more to listen to wherever you normally find your podcasts or from our website@hopechurchglasgow.org if you'd like to know more about us, we are on Facebook and Instagram. Just search for hopechurch Glasgow, Glasgow. Have a hopeful day.