



## CELL GUIDE

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<b>TOPIC</b> Hope in The Father's Love	<b>SPEAKER</b> Ps Darren Kuek
<b>THEME</b> Hope in Hopeless Times	<b>DATE</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

When Jesus spoke, He often drew large crowds which included the likes of tax collectors and sinners. Not only did He accept them, He encouraged them to draw near to learn from His teachings which angered the Pharisees who felt that there was no distinction between themselves and those whom they considered to be unclean and unworthy. Jesus addressed this issue by sharing three parables (parables of the lost sheep/coin/son).

In this sermon, Pastor Darren focused on the parable of the lost son to help us derive hope from the redemptive nature of God's love for us.

## HOPE IN THE FATHER'S LOVE

### LOVE UNREGARDED

In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, we learn about God's heart and desire to pursue the lost and how He rejoices when they are found. The parable of the lost son however sets the context on where the Father's love stems from (Luke 15:11-13).

By requesting for his inheritance to be given to him early, the lost son displayed a complete lack of respect for his father. Despite his son's callousness, the father still loved his son unconditionally and chose to give him what he asked for. He could have chosen to turn his son down and cut him off but the love for his son held out.

In the same way, we often take God for granted but despite our sinful nature, God still loves us and does not force Himself and His love upon anyone. God gives us the freedom of choice even at His own expense (1 Sam 8:7).

The lost son who was left feeling tired, hungry and lost after he frittered away his inheritance decided to go home to his father. The latter not only readily forgave him for disregarding him but also held a grand feast to celebrate the prodigal son's return. Such love from the father! Have we, like the lost son, turned to the ways of the world and away from our Father? He is always waiting for us to turn back to Him (John 1:12)

## LOVE UNKNOWN

Meanwhile, upon receiving the news of his wayward brother's return, the elder son was filled with bitterness and discontentment (Luke 15:25-32). Like Jonah (Jonah 4:1-3), he felt that he had been treated unfairly, having worked hard all his life alongside his father only to have his brother's less than desirable behaviour seemingly feted by his father.

The elder son was unable to understand that the very love he was jealous of had also been reserved for him but in a different way (Luke 15:31). The father had not one lost son but two, as the elder son was unable to show love like he did, focusing on the 'injustice' of his father's mercy.

Jesus's love is extended not only to those who have sinned but also those who feel like they have been dealt with unfairly. Like the elder son, the Pharisees were filled with a sense of superiority and self-righteousness, assuming that only they were deserving of the Father's love as they had done what they felt was expected of them.

## CONCLUSION

It may feel difficult to rejoice for others at times as we may feel that we have been short changed by God. It can also prove difficult to love some people because of the hurts they may have heaped upon us even when they may have repented of their wrongdoings.

The way we can show love and mercy to others is to bear in mind that God, who first loved us, has always been with us and given us everything we need (1 John 4:19, Luke 15:31). When we experience God's love, we will be able to show love to those who need it, regardless of who they are or what they have done.

# QUESTIONS

1. Has there ever been a time in your life that you felt like you were running away from God? What made you come to your senses, repent and come back to Him?

2. The elder son in the parable was representative of the Pharisees. They felt absolutely no joy when sinners had restored relationships with God and instead were more concerned about their own lives and doing everything right by the book. How can we as believers guard against such ungodly behaviour?

3. A. In today's society, who would represent the tax collectors and sinners?  
B. Are there groups of people who may have been outcast by society and need the good news of Jesus Christ?  
C. Is there a group your cell group can reach out to?