

# Lost

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 28 August 2016

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[ 0 : 0 0 ] In St. Luke chapter 15, we see in verse 18, this key verse, I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.

Now, this is, of course, a very familiar story. The prodigal son, one of the best known parables that Jesus ever told. But, of course, it, like everything else, comes within a certain context.

And if we look at this chapter, we see that this is the third of three parables Jesus tells. Two short ones and one slightly longer one. And the first is, of course, about the lost sheep, the sheep that wanders away.

What man are you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and ninety wilderness, go after that which is lost until he find it. When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.

And then the neighbours rejoice and everybody rejoices with them. Or what woman having ten pieces of silver. And this was almost certainly a reference to the kind of ceremonial headdress, which brides would weigh in.

[ 1 : 0 1 ] It was part of her sort of dowry. Each coin would be worth a certain amount of money. And to have the complete headdress was not quite a matter of life and death, but was certainly a matter of utmost importance for a person in that situation.

If she lose one piece, it's a disaster. So she lights a candle, sweeps the house, seeks diligently till she finds it. When she finds it, she's so overwhelmed with joy that everybody has to rejoice.

In these first two, the point Jesus is making is twofold. He is making, first of all, the point that because that which is missing is of such value, despite the abundance of others.

You know, neither the shepherd says, you know, well, I've still got ninety-nine left. It doesn't really matter. No, he goes after the one that is missing. The woman doesn't say, oh, well, I've still got nine other pieces of silver as long as I take care of them.

No, she goes after the one that is missing. And this is partly to answer Jesus' critics who are accusing him, not untruthfully. He is, in fact, going to eat with publicans and sinners and fellowshiping with them.

[ 2 : 0 9 ] This man received sinners. He eateth with them. He shares fellowship with them. So he tells them this story. Look, if we're going to reach the lost, and you people would acknowledge that publicans and sinners are lost.

They're sinners. They're in need of repentance and faith. Then you've got to go after them. You've got to go where they are. And this is why he tells the story about the shepherd who goes after the sheep that is lost.

The woman who goes after the coin which has gone missing. And when they find it, they rejoice. Of course they rejoice. Jesus rejoices with those who find salvation, no matter what kind of life they led before.

This is partly the story he is trying to get across. But there is a kind of change of time slightly in the third instance. We've got the lost sheep.

We've got the lost coin. Now we've got the lost son. Or the prodigal son is the story he's most famously known. Now many have said in the past, understandably, that it's not really shouldn't be called the prodigal son.

[ 3 : 11 ] It should be called the parable of the forgiving father. All of that is true as well. But we know it best as a prodigal son. There are differences in this story. The theme of, yes, being lost and found and rejoicing at the end, that's still consistent.

But a lot of things are different. The sheep that went astray just happened to wander astray. It didn't wake up one morning and think, I'm really fed up with the shepherd and the rest of the flock. I'm going to go and make my own way.

No, it just wandered off. It was following the grass and moseying along. And it just happened to go astray. It didn't mean to. It didn't plan to. It didn't have a big idea and a great itinerary.

It just wandered off and got lost. It didn't mean to. The coin that got lost wasn't its fault. It was somebody else's carelessness or negligence or whatever.

The coin got lost. And the woman went seeking after it. Sometimes we're in a situation where it's really not of our making. Some people may grow up knowing nothing of Christ.

[ 4 : 12 ] And it's not their fault in one sense that they are lost. But they will be lost just the same unless they are gone after and sought and found. Some may have begun in a place of safety and just sort of wandered off a bit and they didn't realize they were doing it.

They just began to slide. They too need to be gone after. But in the third parable, it's a bit different. The third parable, there is rebellion.

There is sin. There is fault on both sides, both brothers. And it falls. And this is part of what Jesus is trying to tell him. Now, a certain man had two sons.

The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. Now, just stop there for a minute. That's not a case of him saying, Now, come on, give me some pocket money.

Give me something to go off and have a good time. Now, what he's saying is, Look, when you die, this farm or this estate is going to be divided between my brother and me. Okay? He's the elder brother.

[ 5 : 11 ] He's going to get the bigger portion. But some of it, about a third at least, is going to be mine. So, give me what's mine now. Now, for a start, that is effectively like saying, Father, I cannot wait for you to die.

It's just taking too long. I want to get all this while I'm young. I want to have what's coming to me. Frankly, I wish you weren't here. Because then I could have it. And then it would be mine.

And I could do what I wanted with. So, give me it now. If you have to sell land, sell it. If you have to get rid of property, get rid of it. I want what's mine. Now, if you even stop and begin to think about it, any child, grown-up child, saying that to their parent, who will be getting on in years, has probably slogged all their life to build up such inheritance as they have, another, saying, Well, I don't really want you, Father, but I do want your money.

So, you know, come on. Let's have it. You're in the way, Father. That's effectively what he's saying. I wish you were dead so that I could get your money. And we don't really, when we begin to read this parable, we quickly move on.

We don't really think about what this is actually saying. That's what it's saying. It is an act of such, not outright hatred, but just sort of disregard, just complete, cold-blooded indifference.

[ 6 : 30 ] I really couldn't care whether you live or die. I want my money. I want what's coming to me. And I want to go and live my life. It's my life. You've got the goods tied up in the farm.

I want what's mine. Now, the Father could have said, Well, tough. It's mine until I die. So you're not getting it. You can jolly well wait. And when it's all divided up, then you go and do what you like.

And if you happen to be 60, well, that's fine. But for now, it's mine. And you're not getting a penny of it until I'm gone. He could have said that. But he didn't. He divided up to them as living.

That's what he did. He sorted it all out between the two. What was the elder brothers? What was the younger? And when it says not many days after, the younger son gathered all together. It doesn't just mean he packed all his backs.

It means the sum of his wealth that his father had divided to him would have been in land. Or in, you know, movable goods and property and so on.

[ 7 : 30 ] But it says he gathered it all together. It means he sold it. He sold all the goods and channels and property that would have been part of the family inheritance. He gathered it all together.

He turned it into cash. That's what it means he did. And then he took it all together. Took his journey into a far country. And there, wasted his substance with riotous living.

It's not just that he tried to go into business and he made a bad call with an investment that went wrong. No. He just partied it all away. That's what he did. And then, when he had spent everything, there arose a mighty family in that land.

And he began to be in war. He joined himself as a citizen of that country and sent them into his fields to feed swine. The lowest of the low job.

Now, remember Jesus. Everything Jesus is saying is in a Jewish context. Remember the Jews considered swine to be unclean. He would never eat it. They wouldn't touch it if they could avoid it. But here he is, this, we must assume, Jewish boy, now in a far country, having to feed the pigs out in the field.

[ 8 : 37 ] And obviously, he says he would love to have eaten what the pigs ate. But no, we can't actually eat the same as what pigs eat. Because they can eat all the refuse and leftovers. And they reckon some commentators have said there's a particularly kind of hard nut that the shells of which are the outward pods of which the pigs can crunch up.

They can eat. They can digest. But, you know, humans, unless they're really desperate, they wouldn't even think about it because we just can't eat the stuff that they ate. He wishes he could eat as well as the pigs.

He sent them into this field to be. He would fain have filled his belly with the husks and swine to eat. No man knew about them. Oh, yes, he'd have got paid for his job. But what he would have got would have been a pittance.

Because this wouldn't have been high-skilled, you know, high-tech agriculture labor. This is something, you know, anybody could do. And the only reason he's getting it is because he'll take everything because he's desperate. Whatever he gets wages-wise is not going to be enough to keep him going.

Never mind sustain his old lifestyle. Let alone is it going to be able to support him in famine times. What happens when there's a famine? Prices go through the roof.

[ 9 : 45 ] If there isn't food, then what little food there is becomes extortionately expensive. And the only people that can afford it are the rich. If the famine had struck when he still had all his father's money, he might have stood half a chance.

They'd only spend it. Ryan was living, partying, it's all gone. He's got nothing. His pittance that he gets can't compete with famine prices. He is beginning to starve.

And no man gave up to him. And you might say at this point, oh, what about all his friends? What about all the people he partied with? They don't want to know him now. They only wanted his money in the first place. You know, you ever notice that?

You don't actually stop and think about these things. You know, if you're in a town centre or something like that. Once, many years ago, my little wallet of cards fell out of my pocket and got lost.

Thankfully, it was found again, you know, the same day. But you've got that brief time when you realise you've got no money. You can't go to the machine and get money out. You can't use a credit card to access any money.

[ 10 : 50 ] You've got nothing. You've only got the change that's left in your pocket. Which means that any shop you go into, you will be welcome just as long as they don't realise you've got no money.

You can't go and you can't buy a coffee in a shop. You can't do anything because you've got nothing. And it starts suddenly from being completely confident you can't go, no, I don't care. Just put the machine, just push the buttons, just get out or else use a credit card, whatever I need to do and I'm fine and I'll have to pay up my little.

That's okay. But suddenly you've got nothing and the feeling is completely different. The feeling of being helpless, the feeling of being naked, the feeling that nobody is going to welcome you and immediately realise you've got nothing.

You walk into a shop with all these smiles and nice and I help you and then they realise you've got no money. I don't want to know you like you just blow the door, you know, off you go. We're not going to give you anything or sell you anything you like but all we want, really, the reason everybody's nice to them is they welcome you into a shop, the reason they can't do enough to please you and serve you if that's the kind of service that you get in a shop or in a business or whatever but they'll be as nice to you as you like because they want your money.

That's what it amounts to. They're not putting it very brutally black and white but they want his money and as long as he had money everyone is his friend but that's no different than how we view his father.

[ 12 : 06 ] I don't want you father, I don't want the farm, I don't want the money, I want what you can give me, I want your blessings but I don't really want you. And his friends were just the same.

We want your money, we want to party with you, we want whatever you can give us but we don't really want you. You're just a means to it. Amen. And this is why although it's verse 18 that we're really taking, verse 17 is where the context really begins.

When he came to himself. And that's all that's left really. When you choose the world, when you turn away, when we turn away from the Lord who has blessed us and given us life, who has provided for us and fed us and clothed us and looked after us and instead, we turn to the world.

We don't really want you God. We want your blessings and we want the good things you give us. Thanks very much, that's fine. And we want all that we can get from him but we don't really want you. You're just kind of getting away a bit.

And then you find that the world doesn't really love you the way you thought it. You thought, yeah, I go have a good time in the world and yes, I do all the things I want to be, all the things I want to be. Yeah, as long as you've got money. As long as you've got the power and the influence or the money that they want, they will be your friend.

[ 13 : 16 ] Not for life until the money runs out. And then, there's nobody left but himself. When he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my fathers have grown up in despair and I perish with them.

He came to himself. If we choose not the Lord coming to ourself, it's all we can have left.

If we depart this life without the Lord, then yourself is all you're going to have in outer darkness. Sometimes you hear people foolishly saying, oh, hell's going to be great.

Such a party with all the devil and all the flames and everything. Oh, it's going to be great. No restrictions, no nothing. No, you will be alone in outer darkness. You will be in torment.

You will be screaming out your agonies. with nobody there to comfort. It will be you and the darkness. He came to himself at the end of the day without the Lord.

[ 14 : 21 ] That's all we've got. It's yourself. Because all those we love in this world, even if they love us to the end, will be taken from us or we will be taken from them.

At the end of the day, if you don't have the Lord, it's just yourself. The money doesn't last. The world doesn't last. Even if you had all the money in all the world, Jesus said, what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Because this world isn't going to last either. He came to himself and he realized it's just me and these pigs and they're better off than I am. They can eat. They're getting fed.

It's my job to feed them. It's nobody's job to feed me. Yes, I get my pittance, but that goes nowhere. It's just me and these pigs, me and the world.

He came to himself. Somewhere along the line, if there's going to be hope for any soul, if we are going to find that freedom, that grace, that redemption, that hope, which only the Lord can give, somewhere along the line, we wake up and we recognize that without him, it's just me.

[ 15 : 29 ] He came to myself. He came to himself. He said, how many higher servants have my fathers had? Bread enough of despair. They would be better off working for him. Never mind being a son. I perish with hunger.

Now let's get one thing straight here. He isn't suddenly having Damascus roll. He isn't suddenly having a vision of flights of angels like Jacob did with Jacob's ladder there. It's basic.

It's hunger. I am worse off now than I was when I was back home on the farm. Even the servants are better off than I am now. Yes, I've had my partying.

Yes, I've had my riotous living. Yes, I've spent all my money and never got nothing. He came to himself. He's not having a spiritual experience. He is starving to death.

He's having a brutal reality that having left his father and his old world behind, he's got nothing. Somewhere along the line, we too may wake up to that realisation that without the Lord active and at work in this world, we've got nothing.

[ 16 : 32 ] and it may be the darkness or it may be the hunger or it may be all these practical realities that impinge in us rather than any kind of spiritual experience but we realise along the way we are worse off now than we ever were with the Lord.

Life is bad without the Lord. When he came to himself, he said, he recognised, servants are better off than me. I'm dying here.

I'm starving to death and if I died, would anybody notice what anybody gave? You know, we do tend to think although all of us, when we lose someone, we grieve and sorrow and grief is part of the price of love and although none of us enjoy grieving and sorrowing, if there was a choice, if somebody could say, well okay, I can turn the clock back and I can make it so that you don't have to have this grief but the price of that is you never know this person.

You never know them, you never have them in your life, you never love them so when they die or when they're no longer there, you don't break your heart, you don't cry, nobody's going to be upset because you never had them. We wouldn't want that either.

We would want the person, we would want the love, we would want the opportunity, we would want the experience even if the grief, even if the tears are private, a bunch of us has not at some point in our lives thought in dark moments, if I wasn't here, would anybody miss me?

[ 18 : 05 ] Would anybody grieve if something happened to me? And every single one of us, when we ask ourselves that question, we like to think somebody might shed a tear if something happened to us.

somebody might miss us if we weren't there anymore. In other words, we like to think, and this is a horrible way of putting it, but it's the reality that if we weren't here, somebody would be sad, somebody would grieve, somebody would shed a tear if something happened to me.

If I wasn't here anymore, would there be anybody that would grieve for me? And all of us have thought that at some point. Of course, the lighter moments come when then we realise, okay, maybe the world isn't so bad, maybe life isn't so bad, but we all have those dark nights, as it were, of the soul.

And here is this boy in a far country, miles from home, and he knows the reality. If he keeled over and died amongst the pigs there, they would probably eat him.

Nobody would really, nobody's the swineherd, they'd say, oh, never mind, we'll get another one. Nobody would miss him, nobody would grieve for him, except the father who grieved for him all along.

[ 19 : 24 ] I will arise and go to my father. This is the point at which everything changes. He comes to himself and he realises it's only himself.

If he hasn't got his father and the support and love and home from which he left, then he's got nothing. He came to himself. I will arise and go to my father. This much I can do.

What makes him do it? What makes him not say instead, oh, well, I haven't got a chance there. I mean, I know, I effectively wish my father was dead. If I go back to him now, what's he going to say to me?

Now, interestingly enough, there is a sort of a legend or story or parable in the Buddhist religion where there's a similar story but the father in that instance hides himself from his returning son.

He hides himself and he sets him a series of tests and tasks and challenges and only when the son has fulfilled all these tests is he able to prove that his repentance is genuine and then the father welcomes him back.

[ 20 : 37 ] Now, that's what one false religion has. What Jesus is telling what this parable is, the love of God is nothing like our love.

It is miles beyond our love. It is as far as the heavens are high above the earth. So are my thoughts higher than your thoughts, says the Lord. In Isaiah, 55, that are my ways than your ways.

That is no comparison. You see that? That little story from a false religion. That's it. Yep, okay. That's fair enough. We would all think that. That's pretty sensible. Yep. We would set some tasks.

We want to see the repentance of genuine. We want to know that this wastrel actually is sorry that it's worth bringing him back again. Jesus says the love of God is nothing like that. It's nothing like our love.

It's not the cold, testing, calculating, cagey sort of love that we are used to. When Jesus tells this parable, he has one thing that he is trying to ram home.

[ 21 : 40 ] And that is that the love of God is way beyond anything that we can ask or think or imagine. It's not just this is some gullible old man.

He's not gullible. He knows the loss he has sustained. But the fact of the matter is that for him, his son is worth far more than all the fields he has lost and all the goods and property that the son has sold off and wasted away.

That's just stuff. That's just cash. It's just money. It's the things of this world nothing could bring. He would have given it all if he could get his son back again because it's the son that matters to him.

It's the love of his heart that matters to him. And so when he comes back with his little speech prepared I have sinned against heaven and before thee it's so true he has.

He sinned against heaven because as David says in Psalm 51 against thee the only who I sinned despite the fact he sinned at that time against Bathsheba sinned against Uriah the Hittite sinned against his court sinned against the Lord ultimately every sin is only really against the Lord.

[ 22 : 53 ] Other people yes are hurt by it and affected by it and his father knows what he has done it's in thy sight I have sinned against heaven and before thee. And as he begins his confession further down in verse 21 I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight I am no more worthy to be called thy son all of that is true.

It's not just about saying oh there oh no let's not say that. He's not denying the truth of what the son says he never does. He doesn't say oh no yes of course you're worthy to be my son.

No the truth of what the son has said is all affirmed it's none of it is denied. It's just the love of the father overwhelms and overflows and over spills all of that truth of how unworthy the son is.

I have sinned against heaven and before thee I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. something in this son causes him to think the kindness of my father might receive me back.

If we think of God as having our standards we wouldn't have a hope and this is part of the problem. This is one of the reasons maybe it's only an excuse maybe it's only a pretense but some people do stop and say oh well I've left all these years I've gone my own way all these years you know how can I possibly go to God now he's not stupid he's going to see that my chief motivation is fear or anxiety for myself well that's the motivation for the son here isn't it?

[ 24 : 27 ] He's not saying oh I've just realised how much I love my father it's time I went home no he says I'm starving to death here what option have I got I'm going to die if I stay here that may be your only initial motivation I'm going to die if I stay in my present condition I'm going to be lost for all eternity things are going to get worse and worse I haven't a hope unless I throw myself in my father's mercy and it's not in the first instance love for his father that motivates him it's pure self interest I'm starving to death my father's servants are better off I'll rise and go to my father but as I go I'll have to acknowledge I've sinned against heaven and in that sight I'm not worthy to be called your son no I'm not just let me live just let me stay as one of your hired servants just let me exist let me be fed let me stay there I'll never stay again self interest not love but the father has love enough for both of them he has been watching the horizon since the day his son went when he was yet a great way off his father saw him and had compassion and ran

I've probably mentioned in the past that you know in eastern culture in that time men of substance men of dignity did not run you never ran that would be to diminish your dignity in the sight of the world but this father runs to his wasteful son he ran to him and fell on his neck and kissed him and the son begins his little speech but the father said to himself bring forth the best won't put it on him put a ring in his hands shoes on his feet bring the fattest calf to him let us eat and be merry for this my son was dead and is alive again he was lost and is found and they began to be merry they began to be merry because the father says let's have a party let's rejoice now all this stuff that it costs you every last penny to do when you're having your wife is living the father's giving him for free here we are having a party here we are with a fattest calf eat and drink and be merry and music and dancing and all the rest of it so fit to rival anything he had in the far country and here it all is for free and he never knew it could be so good to be back with his father

I never knew it could be so good to be back home I will arise and go to my father that's where it begins and then he actually did it he arose and came to his father something deep inside told him not perhaps oh well that's good I'm in with a chance but he knew that he had no other chance we should never fall into the trap of the father there's no point in my trying he's not going to receive me he's not going to love me he's not going to accept me look at what I did to him all of that is true and if God were a mere man if he were operating by the world's standards he would take exactly that line he'd be like a Buddhist in the story instead of the loving father Jesus is telling this parable to illustrate this is what the love of God is like now this is a parable that's not strictly an allegory yes we can see different characters in it it's not meant to be you know the father although the father yes it's like represents God the son represents yes the wasteful sinner the other son represents the

Pharisees and scribes the far country the world and so on it's not meant to be pinned down piece for piece there is one main theme in this and that is the love of the father that is what the love of God is like it overwhelms all our resistance there's nothing we can say well he shouldn't actually have me back and the older son says you shouldn't have him back look at what he's done look at the waste he's made look at what he's done why did he ever give me and two sons both of whom estranged from their father in different ways one who just wants to have a good time the other grudgingly plodding away keeping his head down keeping his mouth shut but really he can't wait for his father to die either because he wants the farm he wants the land he wants the estate but he wants it on his terms and he gets to feel good about it they are both at fault they are both included by their father this is the love of God that is at the centre of it all the love of God which is prepared to encompass and include and engather not only the out and out wasteful sinner but also the likes of the scribes and the pharisees and the so called righteous who think they are doing good because they too can be sons of God they too can be sons of the father if only their attitude is different because they too can be law

I am no more worthy to be called thy son make me as one of thy hired servants but what would have happened if he had done that if he had made him as one of his hired servants he said ok well you can start working for a living and you can start working off your debt and so on you probably won't be able to put it in enough years to put all the stuff you've sold and all the property you let go down the drain but hey you can begin no if he'd done that then he would have been able still to think well I'm working my passage I'm doing my best I am somehow meriting this party that my father has stored to me I'm meriting the fatted cap and the good robe and the ring of my finger and the shoes of my feet because hey I'm working for it I'm putting in the time I'm putting in the labour no he takes him back as a hired servant then somewhere along the line the son would be able to think this is my work this is my toil my slog I deserve my pay no you don't deserve a thing his father doesn't need to take him back he doesn't deserve to be taken back what makes him be taken back is love overpowering love of the father that is what this parable is about of course there is another son as we said earlier he's out in the field slogging away like a beautiful son he came and drew me into the house he hears the music and dancing what's it about and he said to him my father my brother has come my father hath killed the fatted cap because he had received him safe on Saturday he was angry

[ 30 : 55 ] I would not go in so what's he really saying I wish my brother was dead that's what he said I wish he hadn't come I'm annoyed I'm angry that this is how he's being received he took half or a third of the family estate he sold it off he's taken all your inheritance all your stuff this is what he's done with it but you see the thing is that to the father that doesn't matter compared to having his son you know all the sins that we're all guilty of they're all genuine sins they're all real sins some of them will be hideous sins that we would cringe if the world actually knew we would just want to curl up and die God sees them all in the cold light of day he sees all the years that we have wasted he sees all the things that we have done but it doesn't matter if he gets you if he gets his child in his arms he would give it all look at what he did give when he came from the glory of heaven and he came to the confinement of earth the confinement of a human body which meant that at the second person of the trinity he could no longer fill the heavens and the earth he had to be confined when he's in Judea he can't be in Jerusalem when he's in Jerusalem he can't be in Nazareth when he's in Nazareth he can't be in Capernaum he is confined he has to walk and go by boat he has to eat and drink he gets tired he gets hungry and thirsty he weeps he has all the human frailties and confinements and difficulties that ordinary humans do and he is tempted yet without sin and on top of all this when he has fulfilled all these years in a sinless life he is effectively judicially murdered in one of the most brutal and horrific ways that history has ever known and all of this

God the Father permits and approves and allows and plans we might say with the full acceptance and approval and support of the Son why?

so that sinners like us can be saved the price that he parts with the price that he pays it is all worth it to have this wayward child home but the elder brother says I wish he was dead I wish he wasn't here why?

why? he said look at what he's done and he answered he said all these many years do I serve thee now and I transgress now any time my commandment yet thou never gavest me a kid that I may make many with my friends what does he say here?

why didn't we have a party dad? you and me why didn't we sit down and eat and drink together why couldn't I be with you the way that he's with you now? no he doesn't want him I want my friends I want you to give me a fattened calf and I care to make many a fattened not you father but me and my friends I want my thing you never did that for me did you ever ask son?

[ 34 : 02 ] did you ever ask me father? did you ever see everything's yours anyway nothing was stopping you doing it as soon as this thy son was come which had devoured thy living with harlots that was killed for him the fattened calf so now art ever with me all that I have is lying it was meek that we should make many and be glad for this thy brother was dead he was gone as far as we knew he was lost but he's found he's been brought back of course to his rejoicing now the best robe is not going to stay in him forever the ring is not going to stay in his hand forever the shoes on his feet the fattened calf will be eaten up the party will be over everyone will have to go back to their work even when you go to a wedding even when people are in their best ever clothes the bride in her beautiful dress and the bridegroom wedding is higher the kilt with the silver studs or whether it's tails or whatever it is that he puts on you don't usually have it in your wardrobe take it out every few days and put it on no it's for a special occasion you might hire it or you might buy it or make it or whatever but it's a special occasion it's a one off if we are converted and brought within the sphere of God's kingdom there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels but you can't stay on the mountaintop if you're going to be brought home the party will end you have to get back to work you have to get on with the work you get on with life you have to get on with following the Lord sometimes it'll be brilliant other times it'll be slow that is life life in all its fullness life in all its blessings and sorrows and joys if you fall in love with someone and they propose to you or you propose to them or whatever you're not expecting that once you say yes or once they say yes that that means we'll always have loads of money everything will go right never be anything wrong we have kids they'll all be perfect kids we'll never ride nothing will go wrong nothing bad will ever happen we'll always have everything going right they don't imagine that they know they're signing up for tears as well as joys they know they're signing up for struggles and pain in times of illness as well as times of blessing they know they're in for a rollercoaster of a ride but the point is they want to take that ride with the person they love more than anything else that's what Christ invites us to the ride of your life the fullness of life the joy that the Father has in his shelter whatever the cost the cost that was paid is the highest price that's ever been paid in heaven or life for the death of his son never mind fields and lands and equipment that's been lost he lost his own son upon the cross he paid the highest price that's what he considered was worth it this my child was dead and is alive again he was lost and his family is this you is this you saying oh well I can never go back no I've left it too long he's never going to accept me why because God is just like you no he's not because God has the same standards as you no he doesn't because God's love is as shallow and as warm and as short as yours no it isn't it's beyond all you can ask or think it's compared to like a bucket of water that's my love in the Pacific Ocean that's God's love and it's depth and it's expanse and it's vastness you look up to the wee bit of the night sky you can see that's like my love and the vastness of the universe in which our own solar system and Milky Way and galaxies only a tiny bit of this vast universe that's what God's love is like compared to ours that is the point

Jesus is trying to get across there's more than one way of sinning against God there's more than one way of forgetting about your father and just wishing he was out of the way because most people would say do you want to go to heaven and the end of the zip you say well yeah I'd love to go to heaven well it means being with God and with his son Jesus Christ oh well I don't really want that I want the blessings I want the money I want the cash I want the good things I want everything you can give me father but I don't want you now when the son wakes up to himself he doesn't say oh I wish I was back on the farm he doesn't say oh I remember the good old days he says I will arise and go to my father when at the end of the day we realise that all you've got is you in this world if you don't have the Lord then sooner or later it becomes about a person it becomes about our heavenly father it becomes about the Jesus who is the way and when we realise that it stops being just an idea

I will arise and go to my father oh yes confess my sin but rather it becomes what we do he arose and came to his father he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ doesn't say he started the journey he fell behind along the way he fell in with thieves he never got there he started and he got there he began and he finished I will arise and go to my father once you have begun you will complete it's the beginning without which you will never complete that you must do what have you got in this world it only wants you for what you can give it it only wants you for your money your input any benefit than your input to it what does your father want you for he wants you for yourself the price he has paid is beyond all that you can ask or think because this is what the love of God is like this is why

Jesus told the Bible let us pray to it and