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| **Jesus Receives Sinners**  *Promise: Jesus welcomes us when we turn and quit fleeing from Him* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Isaiah 12:1-6; Psa 32; 2 Cor 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (Fourth Sunday in Lent), 3/30/25)  *And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”* – v. 2  **Lead In –** In the parable Jesus relates in our Gospel Reading we hear of music and dancing. A father throws a party celebrating the return of his wayward son. Yes, this was a celebration involving feasting, music, and dancing, all with great joy! Is this a part of your imagination as you contemplate our heavenly home? C.S. Lewis famously stated, “Joy is the serious business of Heaven.” And although such feasting is not the continual business with our lives in this age, there are moments when it is important and appropriate even now. Just not always. And even in this Season of Lent, a season of penance and fasting, we do not lose sight that it is all in preparation for the feasting soon to come…   1. **The Important Context for Jesus’ Parables in Lk 15…**    1. “This man receives sinners and eats with them” …    2. The lost sheep, lost coin, and the lost son …    3. Joy in heaven and before the angels… 2. **The Younger Son Is Indeed Wayward**    1. The brazen demand for his inheritance…    2. The journey to a **far** country – independent, far from…    3. And yes, reckless partying all the time… 3. **Jesus Directs Us To and Exemplifies the Father’s Heart**    1. There is no soft-pedaling sin…    2. Dire circumstances help the son come to his senses…    3. The father receives his son back as his son…   **Final Word –** Hopefully you have figured out who the Pharisees are represented by in the parable? They are the oldest son. The son who is recoiling at joining the feasting, music, and dancing. They, like the oldest son, can’t get over how undeserving the younger son is for such a party. They, like the oldest son, have not appreciated the warmth and compassion of his father’s heart. They have little sense of their own waywardness, cold heartedness, and diseased spirits. They see no need for the Great Physician and the loving Father. They are in danger of shutting themselves out from the greatest of all joy and feasting, the incredible, good news that Jesus receives sinners who repent and believe in Him. And that is how He receives you. … All of us.  **Lk 15:6-7** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.  **Lk 15:9-10** And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”  **Ps 100:3** Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  **Lk 12:32** Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. | **Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 ESV**  *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*  1Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. 2And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”  3So he told them this parable: . . .  “There was a man who had two sons. 12And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. 13Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.  17“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ 20And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.  25“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27And 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.’ 28But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ 31And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”  **Ph 3:20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.  **Ro 8:16-17** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.  **Ez 33:11** As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.  **Lk 19:10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.  **Lk 5:31-32** And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” |