

Reflection on 27 March 2022 (Celebration Sunday)

*O God, teach us the way that we should go; counsel us in the ways of life. We wait upon your teaching and counsel, for we are lost without it. Amen.*

Luke 15:1-3; 11b -32

*The Prodigal and his brother*

In Luke 15, three parables are introduced, and a common theme is to find something lost. In the two parables, the lost sheep and the coin are found by their owners, while in the third, the Prodigal and his brother are found by their father. In all three parables, the focus is not on the lost things or people, but people who diligently search for them – the shepherd, the woman and the father. There are differences, however. In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, Jesus finishes the parables with the need for repentance. As you see, repentance involves a new perspective or changed attitude. For the lost sheep, together with the lost coin, repentance means their changed life entirely as they were restored in their place to be. We can see the same thing in the Prodigal and his brother because we don't hear their verbal repentance, but they are restored in the father's house due to the father's unconditional love.

Similar to the lost sheep and the lost coin, the two sons cannot see how much love their father has loved them. The younger son's insult to his father by requesting his part of the inheritance looks even more dangerous as the son literally expresses his wish for his father's death. The elder son's resentment at his father's generosity even made him not to call his father, 'Father.' Despite all, the father looks even reckless to love them continually and restore them both in his household. In this parable, both sons are lost, including the one who never left home. Although both sons, each in their way, misunderstand the work of grace, both are welcomed home. It lets us look into our relationship with God. Where are we in this parable? Are we more like the elder son or the Prodigal, or both? May God help us reflect on this throughout the week.