

LENT TO HOLY WEEK

Week 1 Sunday 9 March
Week 2 Sunday 16 March
Week 3 Sunday 23 March
Week 4 Sunday 30 March
Week 5 Sunday 6 April
Week 6 Sunday 13 April

Holy week: 14 April to 19 April

We welcome you joining us on the Liturgical journey from Lent to Holy Week. This material reflects the Sunday sermons ensuring the whole church is on the same page and can take the learnings deeper with scripture readings, daily devotions and questions for group discussions. May you draw closer to God whilst learning His truths, find the journey transformative and experience God's love for you in a very deep and real way.

Week 4 Sunday 30 March – The parable of the forgiving father

Bring God into the meeting with prayer, lighting a candle, listening to a worship song.

How deep the father's love for us - Austin Stone Worship Live.

https://youtu.be/z65YxhqY0_E

Read the Bible readings provided:

Liturgical Date: Fourth Sunday in Lent

First reading: Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm: Psalm 32

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Luke 15:1-3 The Message

The Story of the Lost Sheep

15 ¹⁻³ By this time a lot of men and women of questionable reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, "He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends." Their grumbling triggered this story. ¹¹⁻¹² Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.' ¹²⁻¹⁶ "So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to feel it. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corn-cobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. ¹⁷⁻²⁰ "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father. ²⁰⁻²¹ "When he was still a long way off, his father

saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.' 22-24 "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a prize-winning heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time. 25-27 "All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.' 28-30 "The older brother stomped off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!' 31-32 "His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!'"

A reflection on the Bible reading by: Yvonne Roberg (Local Preacher)

Of the two sons who do you think was more at fault? The young man who insisted on getting his inheritance early, (which was considered completely wayward at that time) and squandered it, or the resentful older brother who couldn't share in the joy of his brother's return home? What is fascinating about this parable is that it seems to expose layers of sin. Some sin is palpable and so obvious. The younger brother who goes to a foreign land and wastes his money, is so obviously foolish and sinful. He spends all his inheritance by gratifying all his sensual desires. But scripture tells us that when he came to his senses and remembers that his father's servants were treated better at his own home, he decides to return home, repentant, placing himself at his father's mercy. At his son's return the father throws a huge party, invites all the neighbours, kills the fattened calf, and celebrates. He who was lost is now found!

In a different way the older son's behaviour exhibits that under his veneer of righteousness cracks begin to appear... attitudes that had lain hidden in his heart, motives, beliefs, and thoughts that he could generally keep under wraps began to emerge. When the pressure increased, and his perception around his brother's return could no longer be contained, they spilt over into a rage that refused to be tempered by the joyous celebrations. The older son's façade of commitment to his father was founded on "doing the right thing for the wrong reasons". Not only that but his self-righteousness has robbed him of compassion and resulted in him being caught in a terrible tangle of jealousy and anger that alienated him from his family and community.



In this parable it is the younger son who shows true repentance. He returns home to "face the music," confesses his sin to his father and submits himself to whatever punishment lies ahead. Those who are able to clearly see their sin, are often more likely to seek forgiveness from God and acknowledge their need for Christ's redemption. Much more dangerous are those of us whose sins are not readily visible. Very often these people tell themselves that they are better than others, that their sins are not as bad as those people who sin so openly and so these people often fail to humble themselves before God in confession and repentance – and so find themselves alienated from God and dangerously close to missing out on the salvation that Jesus offers repentant sinners. Both sons are equally lost. Like all of us, whether openly or secretly sinful, both need of a saviour. The father awaits, arms wide, ready to receive all repentant sinners.

Questions for group discussion:

1. In the story of the prodigal son, which son do you mostly relate to? Why?
2. How might you learn from these two brothers and their experiences?
3. When it comes to sin in your own life are you able to come to the father and confess and repent of your sin? If so, please take a minute to draw near to God and confess your sins.
4. Do you perhaps know of someone who is lost in sin, and are you able to pray for them or reach out to them?

Daily lectionary readings:

- **Monday, March 31, 2025:** [Psalm 53](#); [Leviticus 23:26-41](#); [Revelation 19:1-8](#);
- **Tuesday, April 01, 2025:** [Psalm 53](#); [Leviticus 25:1-19](#); [Revelation 19:9-10](#);
- **Wednesday, April 02, 2025:** [Psalm 53](#); [2 Kings 4:1-7](#); [Luke 9:10-17](#);
- **Thursday, April 03, 2025:** [Psalm 126](#); [Isaiah 43:1-7](#); [Philippians 2:19-24](#);

- **Friday, April 04, 2025:** [Psalm 126; Isaiah 43:8-15; Philippians 2:25-3:1](#);
- **Saturday, April 05, 2025:** [Psalm 126; Exodus 12:21-27; John 11:45-57](#);



FAMILY TIME:

Written by Jenny Blake – CHILDREN'S PASTOR – jennyb@bmc.org.za

Week 4 - The Lost and Found

Scripture: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 (The Message)

Key Verse: “But his father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.’” (Luke 15:22)

Introduction

Have you ever made a mistake and thought, “There’s no way I can fix this”? Or maybe you felt like running away from a problem? Today, we’ll look at one of Jesus’ most powerful parables—the story of a lost son who made some big mistakes, but whose father never gave up on him.

Bible Story Recap

Jesus told a story about a man with two sons. The younger son wanted his share of the inheritance early, so the father gave it to him. He ran away, spent all his money on reckless living, and ended up broke and starving. Finally, he realized his mistakes and decided to return home, hoping his father would at least let him be a servant. But to his surprise, his father saw him coming and **ran to him** with open arms! Instead of punishment, the father threw a huge party, celebrating that his lost son had come home.

However, the older brother was upset. He had stayed and worked hard, yet he felt like he wasn’t appreciated. The father lovingly reminded him that everything he had belonged to him too, but that it was right to celebrate when someone who was lost finds their way back.

Family Discussion Questions

1. **Why do you think the younger son wanted to leave home?**
Talk about why people sometimes think they’ll be happier away from God.
2. **What does the father’s reaction teach us about God’s love?**
Discuss how God always welcomes us back, no matter what we’ve done.
3. **How should we respond when someone turns back to God?**
Share why it’s important to celebrate rather than judge.

Teen Discussion Questions

1. **Which character do you relate to most—the younger son, the forgiving father, or the older brother? Why?**
Encourage self-reflection on personal faith experiences.
2. **Why do you think the older brother was angry? Do we sometimes struggle to forgive like him?**
Discuss how jealousy or self-righteousness can make it hard to celebrate others.
3. **What does this story say about God’s grace?**
Reflect on how God’s love is freely given, not something we earn.

Activity: Writing a Letter Home

Imagine you are the younger son, writing a letter to your father before returning home. What would you say? This helps us reflect on repentance and God’s grace.

Prayer

“Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us even when we wander away. Help us to always come back to You and to celebrate when others do the same. Teach us to love like You do. Amen.”