

**The Surprise of Grace**

Luke 15:11-22

**“Dig Deeper Questions: Use these questions to enhance your study of the sermon.**

1. This is the third of three connecting parables presented to a diverse audience of highly respected, learned and externally holy Pharisees; socially despised tax collectors and sinners; and ordinary people, like us. Have your group have members role play and respond to the parable from each of the perspectives. How do the context and worldviews of each of the groups help you understand Jesus’ purpose for the parables? Visualize yourself in a 21st Century context with three similarly diverse groups. How would the discussion go?
2. Pastor Dave divided this sermon into **four Scenes** to create suspense and drama. Scene one was **Rebellion** beginning in *Luke 15:11*. Why was the younger son’s behavior so *Countercultural* then and now in Middle Eastern culture? How would anyone listening then have expected the father to act? How does Western culture differ regarding free will and freedom? Which culture matches up with the message of this parable and the Gospel?
3. Scene 2 was **Reality** (*Luke 15:13-16*). Pastor Dave illustrates that the reality and consequences of the younger son’s actions impacted both him and his family in similar ways to today. Has human nature changed? How should a parent respond today consistent with Jesus’ teaching in this parable? How does our life, especially as a parent, reflect our view of God?
4. Scene 3 is **Repentance** (*Luke 17-20*). Besides the obvious contrast that a lost person, (not a sheep or coin) has both free will and a heart. Why would the listeners not anticipate this/be shocked by it? Why do modern parents still need **to pray and wait** rather than react in an authoritarian and aggressive manner in recovering and restoring their *prodigal* children?
5. Pastor Dave called Scene 4: **The Shocking, Undeserved Life-Altering Gift of Grace**. Why would the father’s compassionate forgiveness and behavior have put the diverse Middle-Eastern audiences into total shock and confusion? Why do/would atheists or believers in works-based religions view Christianity as offensive or without standards? How could you effectively explain Grace to a non-Christian?

**APPLICATION:**

Be prepared to explain the distinctiveness of Grace to others who grew up in a works-based religion and/or have abandoned God completely in their lives. Pastor Dave’s sermon and the verses maybe an effective way to break through the impossibility and disappointments of worked-

based religions. Or perhaps you yourself have never totally accepted God's forgiveness and grace and are still haunted by guilt. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith and totally accept Christ's forgiveness on the Cross.