

Sermon Starter – God’s Great Compassion for the Lost

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus tells a parable about a man with two sons. The younger son demands his share of the father’s property, then squanders his inheritance in a distant country. When the younger son returns home—desperate and poor—his father welcomes him home with open arms. But now the older son is furious and offended by the father’s extravagant welcome, his forgiveness of his brother, and the welcome-home celebration. The father tells the older brother they had to celebrate because the lost had been found.

Who is the central character in this parable? Initially, it appears that, unlike last week’s parables of the lost sheep and lost coin, the main figure may be the one who is lost—the younger son. However, the father eclipses everyone else by the extraordinary compassion he extends toward both of his sons. As in the other parables, the one who is searching is the central character. Perhaps repentance and salvation in the Gospel of Luke is about being found.

From Leader, Summer 2011. ©2011 MennoMedia.