

Parable of the Two Sons (Luke 15:11-32)

One possible background text: Jeremiah 31:16-20:

Thus says YHWH: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says YHWH: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; there is hope for your future, says YHWH: your children shall come back to their own country. Indeed I heard Ephraim pleading: "You disciplined me, and I took the discipline; I was like a calf untrained. Bring me back, let me come back, for you are YHWH my God. For after I had turned away I repented; and after I was discovered, I struck my thigh; I was ashamed, and I was dismayed because I bore the disgrace of my youth." Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he the child I delight in? As often as I speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore I am deeply moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says YHWH. (see also Hosea 11.1-9)

Chiastic structure of 15:11-24, part one

A: *A son is lost*: "give me my share" (v. 12)

B: *Goods wasted in extravagant living* (v. 13)

C: *Everything lost*: "spent everything ...began to be in need" (v. 14)

D: *The great sin*: tending pigs for gentiles (v. 15)

E: *Total rejection*: "no one gave him anything" (v. 16)

F: *A change of mind*: "came to himself ...get up and go to my father" (v. 17-18)

F': *An initial acceptance*: "make me a servant (I will pay it back)" (v. 19)

E': *Total acceptance*: "father ran and kissed him" (v. 20)

D': *The great repentance*: "I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (v. 21)

C': *Everything gained*: robe, ring, and shoes (restoration to sonship) (v. 22)

B': *Goods used in joyful celebration* (v. 23)

A': *A son is found*: son was dead and is alive, was lost and is found." (v. 24)

Chiastic structure of 15:25-32, part two

A: came to house, heard music and dancing (v. 25-26)

B: Your brother is safe: have a feast (v. 27-28a)

C: father comes to reconcile (v. 28b)

D: complaint of elder son against both father and son (vv. 29-30)

C': father tries to reconcile (v. 31)

B': your brother is safe: have a feast (v. 32)

A; [missing parallel of entering the house for music/dancing]