Jesus Unfiltered - **WK 1 - The Runners**

**Number 1 way Jesus taught - parables. 1/3 of teachings - short stories / tell of heaven / hell / and how God views life. Want to know what the Kingdom's like? - ask Jesus – it’s unfiltered**

**Many are hard to follow, understand or accept... Mark 4:10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that, " 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'" (Why is he making it so difficult?)**

1. **Parables were given to both conceal truth and reveal the truth**

**Those who are called to know and really want to know the truth - will find understanding - those who want stuff will be turned off & confused**

**It separates those who want a slice of God and those who truly hunger for God (Seek His kingdom & righteousness. Mt 6:33. Blessed are those who hunger & thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Mt 5:6)**

**Today a parable / story of three runners**

**THE STORY: Known often as “The Prodigal” / Prodigal = wasteful**

**Back story: Jesus hanging w/ tax collectors & sinners (drunks, pimps, prostitutes, adulterer, sexually confused, thieves) the broken & lost**

**The Pharisees called him out... Jesus responds with 3 lost parables**

* **lost sheep - going into countryside to get a wandering lamb**
* **lost coin - woman turns house upside down looking for lost $$**
* **lost son - the response of two rebellious hearts - a lost son**

**All about lost & found people & God’s desire to have them home**

**Stories for grown-ups / the mess ups / the stumbler’s / the envious**

**Luke 15:11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. (a dad & two sons running the family business - The table) 12The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ (I get it when you die, but I want to live like your dead already - try that one with your parents! This would have been extremely disrespectful) So he (dad) divided his property between them. (he gave to him the value of a 1/3 of his possessions)**

**13“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country (leaving his families faith for pagan land) and there squandered his wealth in wild living. (His immaturity showed- Heads to Vegas & blows it all! Another woman, another shot, another hit, another needle, another game...)**

**Chair - he sat at his father's table - benefited from his father’s provision - he had a place with his dad - but he did not want it**

**1. In Life - God loves us enough to let us leave.**

**(Psalm 81:11-12, Proverbs 1:22-33, Mathew 23:37-39, Acts 7:39-43)**

**Some of you have gone through it - son as much as this hurts, go**

**We see this through the OT. God gives them over to themselves**

**Psalm 81:11 “But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.**

**Judges 16:20 - one scary verses - 20 Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him. (God cut him loose. I give you over to your own desires, let's see how that works out for you)**

**God will often allow you to fail - so that you can see He is right**

**Romans 1:21-32 (3X - Gave them over to sinful desires / to shameful lusts / to deceits of their heart / to depraved thinking. - God let them leave…**

**Mark 10 - Rich young man- Jesus says sell it all / give away - But I can't - Jesus says, bye. He let him go... he let him leave. (He often let his followers leave)**

**Jesus says you want to know something about God - Know this - He gave you all you have - and if you want to live as if he is already dead - go ahead. He will let you... go on...**

**Back to story - Luke 15:14 After he had spent everything, (blew it all) there was a severe famine in that whole country, (economy crash - little work) and he began to be in need. 15So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. (lowest job - most unclean animal) 16He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, (looked at their slop and craved it - lowest moment of his life) but no one gave him anything. (the world did not care about him - it only spent him)**

**You don't have to be eating pig slop to realize your need - but funny how we often have to get there, in order to understand it**

**The 6 steps to the pigpen: What’s your pigpen?**

**1. Pride 2. Selfish 3. Separation (from loved ones)**

**4. Wasteful 5. Reckless 6. Foolish choices**

**Luke 15:17 When he came to his senses... (the kid wised up)**

1. **In Life - Turning to God is the only option that makes sense.**

**In this life - the more we understand - the more we experience the complexities of science - the struggles of pain, loss & death - or the realities of evil and terror - the more we start to see, that God is the only thing that makes sense - Come to your senses...**

**Prov 14:12 - There is a way that seems right to each person, but its end is the way to death. Nothing makes sense but Jesus - that job, career, your love life...**

**Luke 15:17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father (guilt didn't stop him – he had desperation) and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’**

**His had a plan, beg dad for a job - any job - make me a servant!**

**20 So he got up and went to his father. (the long walk home)**

**I can see him playing it over and over in his mind - what he’d say - how he’d say it - the shame - the brokenness - I blew it - I've sinned against you and God - I'll sleep in the shed - I'll eat outside - I'll pay back everything - I'll be your servant - anything – please…**

**Notice the change:**

**Luke 15:12 - ‘Father, give me my share of the estate. (Give me what I want)**

**Became… Luke 15:19 - I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ (Make me a servant)**

**3. The road home begins with an attitude change.**

**2 Chronicles 30:6-9, James 4:7-10, Mark 14:36, Romans 12:1-2, Psalm 147:3**

**To come home to God - we must go from give me - to - make me**

* **The core of rebellion = "give me"**
* **The core of brokenness = "make me"**

**Want to know where you are with God?**

**How much of your life is, “give me” and how much is, “make me?”**

**God give me money, position, things, love - Or - God break me, make me a servant? I'll do anything! Wherever, whatever, your will**

**How do you get home? Down a broken road - realizing your need**

**Psalm 52:17 My sacrifice, O God, isa broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. / Ps 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.**

**Only a broken person can see the way home**

**We then see the 2nd runner in this story – the father**

**Luke 15:20... “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; (God is watching you – and he loves you) he ran to his son, (to the listeners – this is a lack of dignity for a grown man to run) threw his arms around him and kissed him. (sign of grace)**

**Dad sees him in the distance - is that my son? Drops everything - runs to him - dad's big farmer arms - strong, secure - reaches around him - squeezes - tears! He receives him before his son could even speak.**

**The son tries to say what he rehearsed... 21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ (the rest never gets out - Because the father begins to shout!)**

**22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. (get him new clothes) Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. (ring was key to his future - full son-ship) 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. (biggest calf we have – Let’s party! He’s home!) 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.**

**5 signs of the father’s Grace:**

**1. The kiss, the sign of forgiveness**

**2. The robe, the sign of honor (our God clothes us in righteousness)   
3. The ring, the sign of authority**

**4. The sandals, the sign of freedom (Servants went barefoot)**

**5. The feast, the sign of a joyful welcome**

**I can imagine the lost son begins to weep - my dad... loves me!**

**I am so glad I came home...**

**How much does God love you?**

**\*He loves you enough to let you run**

**\*He loves you enough to let you hit bottom  
\*He loves you enough to let you come back  
\*He loves you so much that he will run to meet you**

**The son came home - dad threw a party in his honor - a feast prepared - table was set - and there next to his father – a chair**

**But this is a story of three runners – here is the third.**

**Luke 15:25 “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. (working hard for his Father) When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. (hears the party - the BBQ - the music - the crowd) 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ (I gotta get a shirt on and get the tables and chairs out - bye! Grabbing supplies)**

**28 “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out (just like he came out to meet his other son) and pleaded with him. (urged) 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ (You give him a big party BBQ? Way to go dad... un-cool… makes no sense… what have you done for me - Reminds me of last week’s parable.)**

**I always did things right - hard worker - faithful - never drunk - or high - stoned - waited for marriage. God what about me... what about my efforts? Where's my party? My ring? I tried my best - and I still feel like you don't love me dad...**

**31 “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. (I love you - I know you - I see you - and what you do – look around, this is yours already!) 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”**

**He tells his other son - your chair is empty too...**

**4. God’s love has to be accepted, it can't be earned**

**Luke 15:22-29, Luke 10:38-42, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:16, John 4:10, Titus 3:3-7**

**Your work with me on this farm does not earn my favor - you have my favor because you were born into my family.**

**Eph. 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.**

**Three BIG Things This Story Reminds Us Of:**

**1. God’s outrageous love!**

**God's amazing love for those who are lost - those who blow it – the guilty, the foolish, those considered hopeless - those who run!**

* **God's heart for you - his compassion for those who return**

**This is about the heart we are to have towards others - How we should respond to those who come home!**

* **The big idea of this parable - Don't ever forget the lost one - and how precious they are to God.**

**2. The consequences of rebellion (2 Samuel 12:13-14)**

**Running - will always leave us devastated - You can't expect to live recklessly and avoid the cost of your choices.**

* **Some things were lost forever - his inheritance was gone**
* **Even when God welcomes you back- consequences follow**

**Pain - suffering - lose - divorce - addiction - STD's - etc.**

* **But if you come home - there is a great eternity ahead**

**3. The selfishness and stupidity of the religious (Christians)**

**Remember – He’s telling these stories to Pharisees - The people I'm having dinner with are the lost son! But you Pharisees - are the bratty older brother - trying to earn your way. Grumpy for doing what is right.**

* **So many Christians become grumpy, angry, jealous**
* **Your breaking the heart of Dad - this attitude is not the life God has for you.**

**The prodigals are all of us - Isaiah 53:6 - We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way...**

**SO - WHERE ARE YOU IN THE FAMILY?**

* **John 10:10 – a place at the table – abundant life.**

**Youngest/ right: searching for life. Lost in the world- trying to find God**

**Oldest son/ left: slaving for life. Lost in the kingdom- trying to earn God**

**Both were lost - Where are you on the spectrum?**

**This is a story of three runners: two sons and a father who waits for one to come home - and the other to come to the party. The invite is the same - Come!**

* **Run - if you’re a seeker**
* **Return - to God’s love - if you’re a stumbler**
* **Rejoice - if you’re sold-out**

**My Chair - My prodigal story - the chair was ready - the father was ready - all I had to do was come home - and rest with my dad.**