

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The difference between mercy and grace? Mercy gave the prodigal son a second chance. Grace gave him a feast. —Max Lucado

In Luke 15, Jesus tells several stories about objects that are lost. First, there is the shepherd who has 100 sheep, but notices that one is missing. What does the shepherd do? He “leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes after the one that is lost until he finds it” (vv. 4-5).

Second, there’s a woman with 10 coins, but she loses one of the coins. What does she do? She sweeps and cleans and sweeps and cleans until she finds it! (vv. 8-10).

Third, there’s a father with two sons. One of the sons, the youngest one, makes some terrible choices. He asks for his part of the father’s inheritance, and then leaves home and lives a life of sin and degradation.

We know this story as the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

The young man comes to his senses. He repents of his sin, decides to throw himself on the mercy of his father, willing to work for him as a servant.

Overjoyed, the father sends orders that a huge feast be prepared. Everyone is happy except the older brother, who has worked long and faithfully for his father. No banquet has been prepared for him! It is not fair!

Rob Bell, in his book, *Love Wins*, notes that at this point the father interrupts his eldest son: “The father redefines fairness. It’s not that his father hasn’t been fair with him; it’s that his father never set out to be fair in the first place. Grace and generosity aren’t fair; that’s their very essence. The father sees the younger brother’s return as one more occasion to practice *unfairness*. The younger son doesn’t deserve a party — that’s the point of the party. That’s how things work in the father’s world. Profound unfairness. People get what they don’t deserve. Parties are thrown for younger brothers who squander their inheritance.”

This is an excellent insight. God does not give us what we deserve! Instead, God treats us unfairly by bestowing grace, love and mercy.

The psalmist makes this very point:

*He does not deal with us according to our sins,
Nor repay us according to our iniquities ... (Psalm 103:10)*

Let’s thank God for God’s amazing unfairness.

It’s called grace!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: God, your love and mercy are beyond understanding. I am humbled in your presence and offer myself anew in your service. Amen.

*Blessings,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Motz*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Deuteronomy 1-3

Monday: Deuteronomy 4-6

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 7-9

Wednesday: Deuteronomy 10-12

Thursday: Deuteronomy 13-16

Friday: Deuteronomy 17-19

Saturday: Deuteronomy 20-22

VERSE TO REMEMBER

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. —Deuteronomy 6:5-6

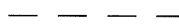
Proverbs for Fun

The following proverbs originate from the 16th century, and most, if not all, are in use today. Fill in the blanks to complete the proverbs. Transfer the letters in circles, boxes and triangles to the line below. Then, unscramble the words to discover a three-word expression.

1. Haste makes _____.



2. Look before you _____.



3. Two _____ are better than one.



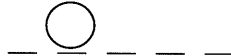
4. Don't look a _____ horse in the mouth.



5. Robbing Peter to pay _____.



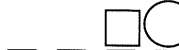
6. A new _____ sweeps clean.



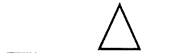
7. Make _____ while the sun shines.



8. One good _____ deserves another.



9. Hitting the _____ on the head.



10. Many _____ make light work.



11. Strike while the iron is _____.



Answers: 1. waste, 2. leap, 3. heads, 4. gift, 5. Paul, 6. broom, 7. hay, 8. turn, 9. nail, 10. hands, 11. hot.

Write letters in circles, triangles and squares here:



Answer (each word is spelled backwards to make it harder to see the answer accidentally):
gnirps si ereh.

Unscramble the three words and write your answer here: _____