



PREVIEW ONLY

The Good Father: How to Find Your Way Home

by Paul Ellis

What In Jerusalem, a party is taking place at the house of a “sinner”. Two scribes passing by overhear Jesus telling the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Each reacts differently to the story of the father’s forgiveness and love; one is offended while the other is drawn into the party. In this story within a story, we are invited to respond to the indiscriminate love of our heavenly Father.

Themes: Unconditional love, acceptance, forgiveness, grace, home

Message God loves you like a father

Who Minimum 4 characters with doubling; 8 characters without

NARRATOR (for table readings; otherwise replace with lines for direction)

JOSEPH, a scribe far from home

KORAH, a scribe who loves the law

SERVANT, the gatekeeper in both stories

JESUS, the storyteller

The FATHER of the prodigal

The SON who leaves the father

The BROTHER of the prodigal

Assorted PARTY GUESTS who react with adlibbed lines

Props A courtyard wall and a gate

Time 12 minutes

Ages 11+

Source Luke 15:11-32

Bonus Free leader’s guide with fun facts, discussion questions, and illustrations.

Narrator It is late afternoon and two young men are leaving the temple compound. Each wears the distinctive robes of a Pharisee, and each has a small leather box strapped to his left hand. They are studying to be scribes, experts in the laws of Israel.

Joseph Did you hear the news? Jesus of Nazareth is here.

Korah So the prophet has returned to Jerusalem. I wonder how many laws he will break this time.

Joseph can't keep the excitement out of his voice.

Joseph Did you know I have met Jesus? Well, I haven't actually spoken to him and he wouldn't know me from Adam, but I heard him speak once, right here in the temple.

Korah Let me guess – he was scolding us Pharisees for something.

Joseph He said, "I am the light of the world. Those who trust me will never wander in darkness." Some of the masters became angry. They said he was boasting in himself and that no claim could be established without other witnesses.

Korah *(Nods)* And rightly so. As the law says, "Let every matter be established in the presence of two or three witnesses."

Joseph Jesus said he had a witness – his father who sent him.

Korah So this Galilean yokel expects us to know who his father is?

Joseph He said his father was God himself.

Korah *(Angry)* That's blasphemy! He's making himself equal with God. He's breaking the first commandment.

Joseph He said, "You do not know me or my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father."

Korah And the chief priests did nothing?

- Joseph** They weren't happy about it.
- Korah** People have been stoned for less.
- Joseph** Still, it makes you think. Jesus said that when we pray, we are praying to our Father in heaven.
- Korah** Scandalous! How can he speak of the Almighty in this way?
- Joseph** Well I enjoyed listening to him. Perhaps he will return to the temple, and I will hear him again. Hello, what is this noise?
- Narrator** The two men hear the sound of music and celebration.
- Joseph** Sounds like some kind of party.
- Korah** As the wise king said, "It is better to go to a house of mourning than a house of feasting, for the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure."
- Joseph** We used to have parties on my father's estate back in Cyprus. But since I came to Jerusalem, it has been work, work, work. I miss home.
- Korah** You are doing God's work, brother, and you will be rewarded in due time. It is only fifteen more years until you are ordained.
- Narrator** The music is coming from a large well-appointed house. A servant stands at the courtyard gate welcoming guests.
- Joseph** *(To Servant)* You there, whose house is this?
- Servant** This is Matthew's house.
- Korah** Matthew the tax collector?
- Servant** The one and only. Would you like to come in? You will be most welcome.

The Servant motions to the house, but Korah's eyes narrow in anger.

Korah I would sooner bathe in the fires of Gehenna than allow my shadow to darken his door. Look at these wretches. That man is a crook and a drunkard. That woman is an adulterer; we tried to stone her.

Joseph *(To Servant)* Why all the music? What is the occasion?

Servant Jesus is here.

Joseph's eyes go wide.

Joseph *(Excited)* Jesus of Nazareth is here?! In this house? Right now?

Korah *(Scoffs)* Well, that proves he's a fraud. If he were a prophet, he would know that these are tax collectors and sinners.

Joseph It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick.

Korah What does that mean?

Joseph It's something Jesus said. He said he did not come to rescue the righteous, but to save sinners, and here they are. At Matthew's house.

Korah *Pfft.* Come, let us leave this den of iniquity before we are seen. *(Turns to leave)*

Joseph Wait, I want to see for myself.

Korah *(In disbelief)* Surely you are not going in there?

Joseph I'll just take a peek over this wall.

Narrator Joseph peers over the courtyard. He sees a fattened calf roasting over a fire and tables laden with food and wine. In the center of a merry crowd stands Jesus himself. He is smiling and embracing the guests.

Korah joins Joseph and stares at the scene.

Korah *(Repulsed)* Ugh. Look at how this man receives sinners. He even eats with them! For the love of all that is holy, let's get away from here.

The music stops.

Joseph Shh, something's happening. The music has stopped.

Jesus *(Addressing the guests)* My friends, would you like to hear a story?

All *(Cheers of approval)* A story! A story!

Joseph *(Whispers to Korah)* I have heard his stories. They're really good.

Korah *(Rolls eyes)* What, are we children to be regaled with tales of fancy?

Narrator Jesus surveyed the faces of those around him. He saw people who had been branded sinners and outcasts. They were looking at him with eager anticipation knowing that he would never judge them. These were his people, the reason he had come, and he loved them.

Jesus This story is about a wealthy man who had two sons. The younger son said:

The Son Father, I want to stretch my wings and see the world. Give me my share of the farm now so I can go have fun and adventures.

Korah *(To Joseph)* What sort of son asks his father for his inheritance?

Joseph Hush. I'm trying to listen.

Jesus So, the father divided his property between his sons.

The Son Woohoo, I'm rich!

Korah *(Shaking his head)* Is this man simple-minded?! He needs to teach this boy the fifth commandment: "Honor your father and mother."

Jesus Not long after, the younger son went to a faraway land where he wasted his money with wild living. He spent everything he had until he had nothing left.

The Son Oh no, I'm poor!

Jesus A severe famine came to the land and the son began to starve.

The Son Please help, I'm hungry.

Jesus But nobody gave him anything.

Korah Serves him right.

Jesus Eventually, he found a job tending pigs.

Korah *(Horried)* He can't do that. As the Law says, "The pig is unclean to you."

Joseph Shhh.

Jesus Conditions were so bad that the son was forced to eat the slop he was feeding to the pigs.

All *(Disgust)* Ewww.

The Son This is the worst food ever.

Jesus The son was lonely and wasting away from hunger. He remembered the laughter and joy of his father's household. He recalled the songs that filled the halls and the food that covered his father's table.

The Son I am a fool. My father's servants have more than enough to eat, yet here I am starving to death.

Jesus Even though he was ashamed of himself, he decided he would go home. He knew what he would say to his father.

The Son Father, I was wrong. I don't deserve to be called your son. Please hire me as one of your workers.

- Jesus** The son left the pigs and set out for home. It was a long trip, and he nearly didn't make it. He had sores on his feet and no food in his stomach. Each day, he'd walk as far as he could, and each night he'd sleep where he fell, hungry and cold.
- Korah** When this wastrel gets home, his father will surely beat some sense into him. As the Proverb says, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline shall drive it from him."
- Jesus** Back at the farm, the father was watching for his son. Every day he would scan the horizon, hoping to see his boy. Then one day, off in the distance, he finally saw what he was looking for.
- Father** *(Eagerly scanning the horizon)* Is it him? Is it really him?
- Jesus** The father dropped everything and ran to his son. But he was shocked to find his child was a shadow of his former self. Barefoot and broken, the boy was barely recognizable. The father bit his fist, angry at the suffering inflicted on his son. But his anger was quickly replaced by tears of joy.
- Father** It is you.
- Jesus** Although the son stank of pigs, his father hugged him and covered him with kisses.
- Father** *(With great affection)* My son, my son! You're alive!
- Korah** *(Shocked)* He *kissed* him?! Apply the rod, man, *the rod*.
- Jesus** The son began his prepared speech.
- The Son** Father, I was wrong, and I don't deserve to be called your son. Please...
- Jesus** But the father didn't let him finish. Calling his servants, he said,
- Father** Quick, bring my best robe so I can dress him. Put my ring on his finger and my sandals on his feet. Then kill the fattened calf, for tonight we celebrate. My son was dead, but now he is alive! He was lost, but now he is found!

Narrator These last words fell from Jesus’s lips like thunder echoing off the walls. “My son... my son...” The party-goers roared with delight.

All *(Cheering)* Yay! Woohoo!

Korah *(Shaking his head)* This story makes no sense. The son dishonored his father. He should be punished!

Jesus Meanwhile...

Korah Oh wait, there’s more...

You have reached the end of the preview.
To purchase the entire script, please click:

PURCHASE