

**KEY VERSE:**

*The Father has loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children.*

1 John 3:1

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE



**THE PARISH OF CHALFONT ST PETER**  
Encounter God, Encourage Others, Engage our World  
Charity Number: 1146043



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# FOUNDATION CAFÉ SERVICE

11th September, 2016



**The Parables:**  
**The Lost Son**



**CHALFONT  
ST. PETER  
PARISH CHURCHES**

## KNOW WHAT:

- Today we look at part 2 of a series on parables Jesus told. Last week was the Lost Sheep, this week is the Lost Son.
- A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly truth.
- Today's parable can be found in Luke 15:11–32.
- It tells us about a family with a father and two sons. The younger son decides to go off on his own and takes his inheritance with him.
- After wasting his money the son realises that he is better off back at his father's house, even if only as a servant.
- The father welcomes him back with open arms, happy at the return of his lost son.

## SO WHAT:

- We are the loved children of a loving father – God.
- There is always forgiveness for us if we are willing to say sorry.

## NOW WHAT:

- Let us take the chance to say sorry if we need to.
- Let us try to be like our father, God, doing our best to grow up to be like him.

## LUKE'S LETTERS:

I loved studying the Bible at university, but I don't think I learnt as much about God in 3 years of study as I have in 4 years as a dad.

You read about unconditional love, about care and nurture and provision, but none of it meant as much to me as when I had to provide that for another person.

Hosea 11 describes God as the dad of a toddler who takes his son by the hands and helps him with his first steps. The child gets bigger and eventually not only learns to walk but decides to walk away. You can feel God's heartache in that passage as he watches his child from afar, hoping they'll come back and waiting for them with open arms. I remember being taken by surprise by the feeling of holding Reuben and Judah's hands as they took those first tentative steps. Reuben can run and walk and jump by himself, Judah isn't there yet. In both of them, though, I feel the closest I can to how God sees us. He's full of a desperate, yearning, overflowing love. The kind that overwhelms and protects and cares.

That's how he sees you. No matter who you are and what you do. Whether you're still holding his hand, walking side by side or walking away. That's how he sees you, as a father full of love, besotted with his child.