



Authentic Relationality: The Heart of the Father

Luke 15:1-2, 11-32



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Background of Luke 15

- “Tax collectors and sinners” were drawing near to Jesus (v.1)
 - “Tax collectors” were Jews collecting money for the Roman Occupation.
 - “Sinners” included prostitutes, thieves and people of ill repute.
- The “Pharisees and scribes” (well-educated, rich and self-righteous religious elites) criticized Jesus for the company he was keeping (v.2).
- Jesus responded with 3 stories:
 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep (vv.3-7)
 - The Parable of the Lost Coin (vv.8-10)
 - The Parable of the Prodigal Son (vv.11-32)

The Return of the Prodigal Son

by Rembrandt,
in the Hermitage Museum,
St Petersburg



The Younger Son and the Father: **The Story** (1)

- **The younger son** demanded his share of the father's property and left to squander it for his own pleasure (vv.12-13).
- He lost everything and became destitute (vv.14-16). He came to his senses and went home to be a servant in his father's house (vv. 17-20a)



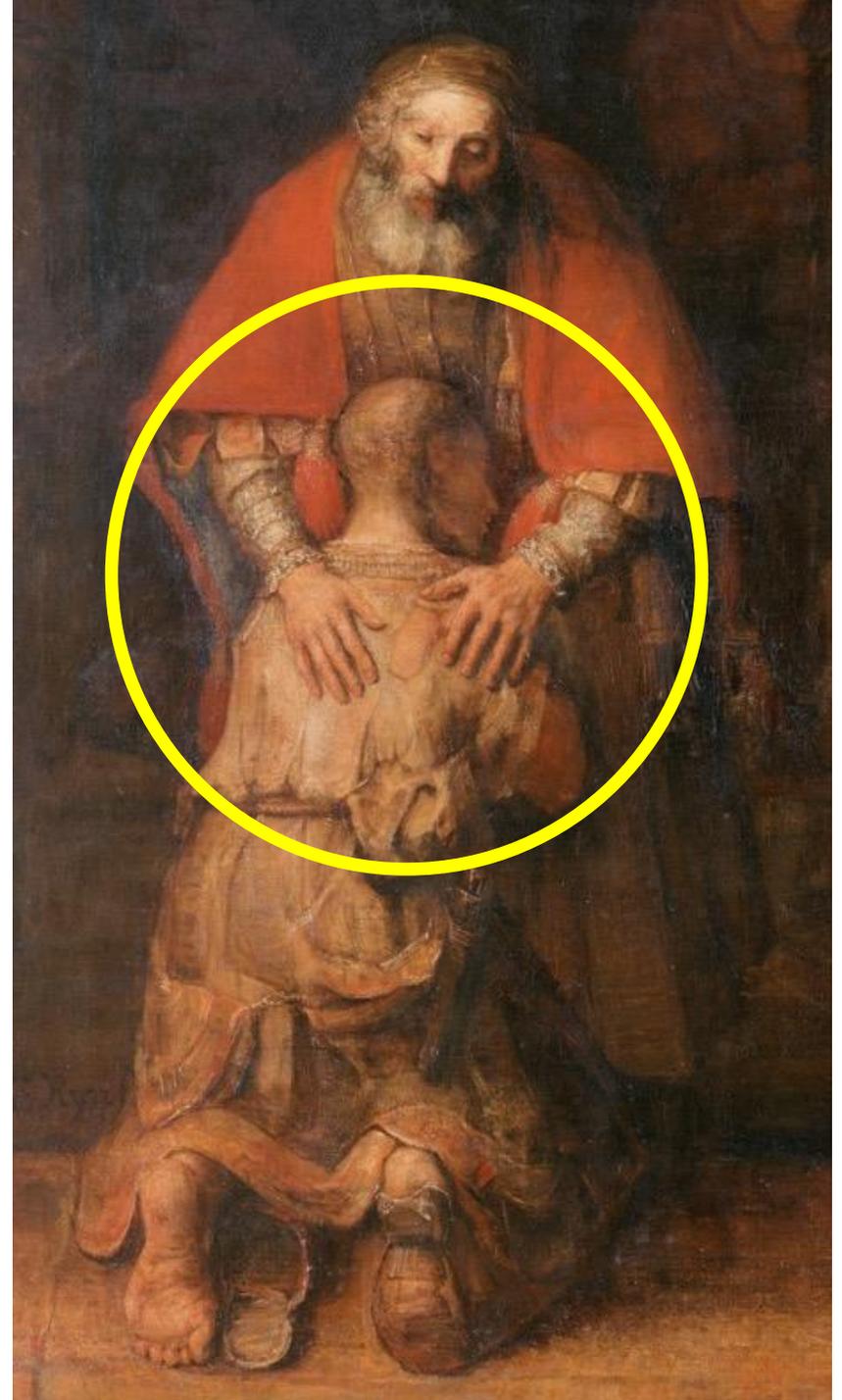
The Younger Son and the Father: **The Story** (2)

- **The heartbroken father**, saw his returning son from a long way off, felt compassion, ran, embraced and kissed him.
- He ordered the **best robe, a ring and sandals** for him (tokens of sonship, not servanthood), and **called for a celebration.** (vv.20b-24)



The Younger Son and the Father: **The Painting**

- **The repentant and destitute son**, on his knees, in rags, leaning on his father, asking to be treated as a servant.
- **The merciful father**, holding his lost son to his chest, with a gentle dominant right hand on his back, and a more masculine left hand on his shoulder, **restoring him to sonship: Grace and Mercy triumphing over Judgment.**



The Elder Son and the Father

The disapproving elder brother: Worked hard, long and obediently for his father, without receiving a young goat the celebrate with his friends: **Transactional relationship.**

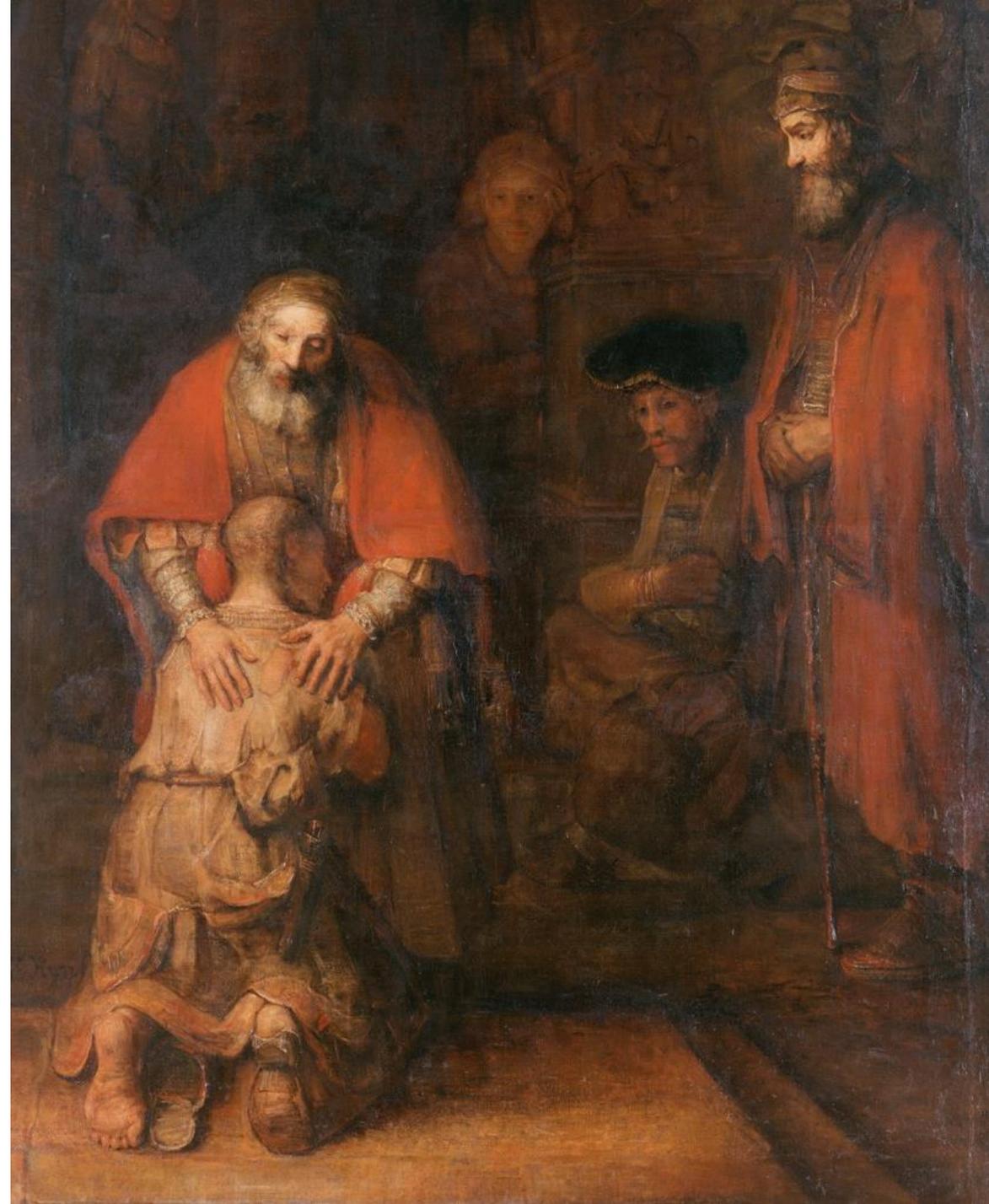
- Resentful of his father's mercy to his disobedient brother, his hard right hand grasping his milder left hand: **Judgment over Kinship.**



The Elder Son and the Father

The **heartbroken father**: Over the son who only wanted his compensation but no relationship with his father.

1. **“You are always with me...”** (v.31a) – Our sonship is granted; it’s not earned.
2. **“All that is mine is yours.”** (v.31b) – The Father’s riches is the Father Himself.
3. **“It is fitting to celebrate.”** (v.32) – Our Father begs us to set aside our judgment and welcome the broken and lost who return to Him.



The Parable of the Lost Sons:

Reflection Questions

1. Humanly speaking, why do you think the Younger Son said he is “no longer worthy to be called a son”?
2. Humanly speaking, how do you think the Elder Son became so relationally distant from his Father?
3. How is the Father’s heart reaching out to you to approach him?
4. How is the Father’s heart teaching us to relate to one another?

Which lost son are you – the one who left, or the one who stayed?

Our Father loves you just as much.

Let us return and remain in our Father's love!

