

THE FATHER IS STILL SEARCHING

We leave the Father, the one who loves us, in all sorts of ways, searching for what we think he hasn't given us. We go looking for love and significance and security and power and recognition and success in all sorts of places other than the arms of the Father.

Nouwen writes:

At first this sounds simply unbelievable. Why should I leave the place where all I need to hear can be heard? The more I think about his question, the more I realize that the true voice of love is a very soft and gentle voice speaking to me in the most hidden places of my being. It is not a boisterous voice, forcing itself on me and demanding attention. It is the voice of a nearly blind father who has cried much and died many deaths. It is a voice that can only be heard by those who allow themselves to be touched.¹¹

In Luke 15, we can hear that voice. If we hear it, the Father is touching us. If he's touching us, he'll bring us home.

The shepherd and the woman and the father need to find what is lost, and they need to celebrate when they find what they're looking for. Behind each of these figures is the Father, who sends his Son to seek and to save and to celebrate those who are lost. The Seeker needs to find, and the Host needs to party. He needs to find sons and daughters to celebrate with.

In the second double parable, each story is open-ended. There is closure in the first story in that the younger son is restored to his Father. But it concludes with these words: "And they began to celebrate." In the first story, the party doesn't end. By the time the second story reaches its conclusion, the party for the younger son is still going on. The second story, on the other hand, ends with the father still searching for his older son.

The party that never ends is just beginning, and the Father is still searching.

¹¹ Nouwen, P. 40.