

**First NYC (4/16/17, Resurrection Sunday)**  
**A Word about Living Again**  
Luke 15.11–32

*Sermon*

Happy Res Day to you. One q I'm reg asked by newer bels is why we worship on Sun when worship used to be on Sat. & today marks reason: X's res on 1st day of wk. In that light every Sun a commemoration of J's rising from dead (Rev 1.10). Res such a significant event that it led 1st bels, themselves Jewish, to switch day for worship. & in that sense they recog'd res as indicating dawn of the new age: not merely day of worship changed, but age of sin/decay/death about to give way to age of shalom/redemption/life. That new age has dawned, but quite obv still waiting for consummation. & while we wait we have these signs along the way that shalom has come & is coming/redemption/life.

So quite fitting that on this Easter we celebrate ord of baptism: one of two sacraments our L has left us as signs & symbols of that very truth: the old is gone, the new has come. & even if slowly yet nonetheless surely, age of sin/decay/death will finally give way to age of shalom/redemption/life. & baptism an indication of that transformation in life of those participating in ord.

& so I'd like to intro the pers who will be baptized today. § Mohamed & I have been friends for over a yr, ever since he began attending worship servs here at 1st. We've spent hrs tog talking about gos & teachings of Scr & pers of J. & I'm thrilled to tell you that Moh not just a friend but a bro in X. I'd like to invite him to come share his story w you.

[Mohamed's testimony]

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Thank you, Moh. When I laid out this series on parables, I knew I wanted to come to this story in Lk 15 on Easter, but had no idea we'd have baptism as part of serv. But I see now G's wisdom in arranging things as he has bc Moh's story ills same pt that J makes in parable of prodigal son. [Whole bks](#) have been written on this psg, so no way I can cover every angle of this story in few mins I have. (Maybe series some day.) But you can see connection to Easter in v 24 §: *was dead, alive again*. Now when we say J was dead, we might say we mean he was really dead: verified by Rom guards, removed from cross, put in tomb, sealed w stone. Phys dead. Younger son not dead in same way J was & yet his father used lang of resurrection to describe transformation.

So what father is saying here/ult J is that phys death isn't only way to be really dead, not only kind of death. IOW there's a way to by phys alive but still actually dead. What is that way? Look at younger son:

- § Life of self-centeredness (12). Deeply disrespectful req.
- § Life of squandering (13). Wealth for pleasure, path of hedonism.
- Led to § life of slavery (15). A slavery of his own making.

J saying that if you follow § that path, you're as good as dead. Echoing what Sol says in Prov so often: path of foolishness a path of destruction/pain/death. Path some of you are on right now: life is entirely focused on yourself/your own agenda/goals/pleasures. You don't even realize how this path has led into bondage, that you're a slave to your passions/appetites/career/relationships. & sad thing is, it's just as much a slavery of your own making as younger son selling himself out. You're phys alive, but in reality you've already died.

But that's not only kind of death while living this psg speaks of. Bc ends in most unexpected way: w older bro's anger over reception his father gives him. If at beg of story younger son is one who's dead, by end of story, it's older son who's dead. What is that path?

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- It too § life of slavery (29). Viewed himself as slave to his father.
- Also § life of squandering (29). Years for acceptance, obeyed for love, path of religiosity. If younger the path of hedonism, this path of spir.
- In fact § life of self-centeredness (29). True motives come out: did it for himself.

J telling us that § this path just as much a path of destruction as other. Looks so diff on outside compared to younger bro: looks like path of righteousness/obed/spir, but in fact actually dead. Why is that? Bc older son did exactly same thing younger son did: used his father's wealth to get what he really wanted. Neither loved his father for who their father was. Both loved him for what he could give them. Neither understood his generosity: they both thought father's generosity was meant to lead them to the stuff they wanted, but neither understood that their father's generosity was meant to lead them to himself. In bib terms, guilty of idolatry: loving gifts more than Giver. 2nd path far more dangerous: even peo who live hedonistic life gen recog not wisest path. But peo who follow path of spir/relig/obed often have no idea that they're as much a slave as peo on 1st path.

But there is hope in this psg, bc those who are dead can live again. How? Father never stops being generous: pursues idolatrous children w grace & love. Ergo v 20 §: *filled w compassion*. But doesn't just run to those on 1st path. Did you notice v 28? § When older bro wouldn't come in, father *went out & pleaded w him*. See, hope doesn't come from § you simply *coming to your senses* (v 17): what is it that you come to your senses about? About what the father is like. That's why psg ends w older bro still dead: never recog'd what father had done.

But how does he solve prob of our idolatry? By dying and living again. See at beg of story § when father divided inheritance, essentially said, "I'll die for your inheritance." & that's what J did for idolators like us. But didn't stay dead §: rose again to give idolators new life. Gos. Come.