

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Welcome Home

**SERIES**

**DATE** 9/18/2022

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Luke 15:11-24

**SYNOPSIS** God eagerly welcomes us home when we turn to him.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Welcome Home

Welcome home. The summer is at nearly over, school has started back up, vacations have passed, and now everyone is **trying to get back into some sort of “normal.”** We are also starting to get back into some sort of "normal" life (whatever that may be) following two and half years of a global pandemic. It's been a challenging time for us all. I know that I've **felt some disconnection**, weariness, and the weight of the changes that we have experienced not only personally, but in the church. And yet, I have hope. And, the hope we have in Christ does not disappoint. (Romans 5:5) I have hope that God is not done with us, hope that God's promises to us are true, hope that we can reconnect with each other, hope that we can reach more people than ever with the love of Jesus. It's time to reconnect, to come home, and reinvigorate our walk with the Lord. So, I asked a few people why they come to church and what keeps them connected.

## ☞ VIDEO

### ☞ Luke 15:11-24

"There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. 13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' 20 So he got up and went to his father. "But **while he was still a long way off, his father saw him** and was filled with compassion for him; **he ran to his son**, threw his arms around him and kissed him. 21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

This is often referred to as the story of the Prodigal Son, however, Jesus starts and ends with a focus on the father of the prodigal. This story tells us a lot about God's character. In a nutshell, it shows us that God is generous and forgiving. It starts with the son asking for his inheritance, and the father gives it to him right away. That's generosity.

Most of us would have said, "no, you have to wait." But this father generously gave his son **☞** what he requested. This is a picture of God, the Father. **He is so generous.** We often don't fully realize his generosity, but he is overwhelmingly generous. He gives us natural life; he gives us everything we have (1 Chronicles 29:14); and, he gives us eternal life when we put our faith and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Then after the son makes a mess of his life, wasting that inheritance, the father welcomes him back with open arms. In fact, he's so happy his son has returned that he throws a big party for ☞him. That's forgiveness. And, that is what God is like. **He is forgiving.** He gives and gives, and even after we make a mess of everything, he welcomes us when we turn back to him.

For many, over the past few years, life has taken some really hard turns. At first, it might have seemed pretty cool. A lot of people transitioned to be able to work from home. Some got checks in the mail to help get through the lean times. Not bad. But over the course of time, you've become weary. Maybe now, you're feeling a bit lonely and disconnected. If so, I want you to realize that **you can always come home.**

The son in our story made a decision... "I'm going back home." I'm sure that could not have been an easy decision for him. What would his father say? How would his brother react? They might scorn him or ridicule him. But he decided it was worth the risk and he got up and went home. Some hearing this today may have similar reservations. "I've been gone for a long time; I have not stayed connected. What will people think of me? How will they react? Will I be judged?" I'm sure this prodigal had very similar questions, but he decided it was worth the risk. ☞It was time to go back home. For some, **it's time to come home.** It doesn't matter how far you've wandered or how bad you may have blown it. It's time to come home.

Here's the really good news: the father welcomed his son back! In fact, he was eagerly looking for him and when he saw him still a long way off, he ran to his son.

When God Ran, Phillips, Craig and Dean  
*The day I left home I knew I'd broken his heart  
And I wondered then if things could ever be the same  
Then one night I remembered his love for me  
And down that dusty road ahead I could see  
It was the only time; It was the only time I ever saw him run  
And then He ran to me; He took me in his arms; Held my head to his chest  
Said my son's come home again Lifted my face; Wiped the tears from my eyes  
With forgiveness in his voice he said Son do you know I still love You  
He caught me by surprise And he brought me to my knees  
**When God ran... I saw him run to me  
I was so ashamed all alone and so far away  
But now I know that he's been waiting for this day***

God is looking and waiting for you to return home. The father ran to his son, hugged him tight and kissed him. He was so glad the son had returned home and it was such a big deal that good-ole Dad threw a huge party. The father sees it as something lost being found. Even more, he sees it as his son had died, but now is alive. That calls for a celebration. **God is welcoming ☞you home. Open Bible Church is welcoming you home, too. Welcome home!**

**Before you go, share your name with someone and some random fact you know.**