

# TFTD L8 It is not fair!

Wednesday March 16th

Today's TFTD comes from Rachel Roberts



**“Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life, he was lost and has been found.”**

**Luke 15:31-32**

When I was training to be a Reader, our New Testament lecturer encouraged us to picture ourselves inside every passage and to mentally dress up as one of the characters. Then, once we had done that, she would challenge us to imagine ourselves as one of the other protagonists in the story.

We started with the Parable of the Lost Sheep... most of us, read that parable and think we are meant to relate with the lost sheep in need of rescuing by the Good Shepherd ... but what if instead we identified with the 99 other sheep, those who were well behaved and not so stupid or mischievous as to go and get lost? Would you not feel a bit resentful at being ignored and your sensible behaviour taken for granted by the actions of the Good Shepherd?

And then we studied the parable of the Prodigal son...

Being the oldest of four children, I have always had a great deal of sympathy for the

elder brother in that parable. “It is not fair!” I used to catch myself thinking whenever that parable was read to us. It’s a common feeling among older sisters (and older brothers too, I dare say). You are always being told to be a good example for the younger ones to follow ... and then you watch them get away with (what to you amounts to) murder.

I am glad that this parable does not gloss over the anger and resentment of the Prodigal son’s elder brother. For, there is another beautiful story to be told within this parable.

The Father does not belittle or ignore his elder son's feelings. Instead, the Father skilfully channels his son's emotion towards that which binds them together “you are always with me” and “what is mine is yours”.

- And when you feel that loved, the other stuff does not matter so much anymore.

- And when you feel that loved, you can begin to allow yourself to look at the world the way the Father intended.

- And when you feel that loved, sometimes you will surprise yourself to find that somehow the Father's gladness has become your gladness...and the Father's generosity has become your generosity.

Well ... that is my take of the story of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son ... time to change roles, as my New Testament lecturer would say and imagine ourselves as the other brother (the more famous one)... I'll leave you now then to your thoughts.

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