

**27 January 2021**  
**How Lutherans Engage the Bible**  
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Welcome/Prayer

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Last Time: Historical Reading

Answers the questions of who, what, why and where

Focus on the plain meaning of the text

Key Questions:

What do we know about the author, about who wrote the passage?

Do we know to or for whom this passage was written?

Why was this text written or what situation is being addressed?

When was this text written and what do we know about that period of history?

Where was this text written and what do we know about that part of the  
ancient world?

What implied political and social realities could shed light on this text?

How is this text similar to other ancient stories or texts that might shed light  
on its meaning?

What things do we know about the ancient world that might help us to read  
and understand this text?

Literary Reading

Key Focus:

How the text was written

How the text conveys meaning

How the text was and is heard

Key Steps in Literary Reading

Step 1: Choose a text with care

More than a verse

A psalm, a parable, a set of instructions, a scene, a story etc

Step 2: Identify what type of literature

Many types of literature:

Historical Narratives, Prophetic Records, Poetry, Letters, Apocalyptic  
Literature, Law, Sermons, Wisdom Literature, Parable

Step 3: Read Different Versions

NRSV, NIV

Eugene Peterson's, The Message

Step 4: Understand the themes and purposes of the book of the Bible

Introductions

## Key Questions

### Literary Contexts

Plot: Situation, Complication, Resolution

Tragedy or Comedy

Comparable Stories: Parallels in other books

Key Details: Cross Reference within Scripture – Concordance

### Character

Major Characters

Minor Characters

Which emotions are elicited from the characters?

### Setting

Spacial Setting: Indoors, Outdoors, a Temple, a Palace, a Leper Colony

Temporal Setting: Time -- Morning, Evening, A Special Day

Social Setting: a Banquet, a Well

## Theme

Key Theme

Surrounding Themes within the book

Example of Themes: Violence, power, morality, love

What is being commanded?

What is the warning?

## Point of View

Includes character, but it involves more

Narrator's point of view

Devil's point of view

God's point of view

## Rhetoric

Author

Text

Audience

How does it all come together?

## Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>11</sup>Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute

living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe — the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>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.'"

Next Time: Book of Faith: Lutheran Theological Reading