Parable of the Prodigal Son

(Luke 15)

Presented in Inverted Parallel Literary Form[1]

[1]Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.[2]This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!

[11]A man had two sons.

1	[12]The **<u>younger son</u>** told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons	A son lost
2	[13]"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.	Goods wasted in extravagant living
3	[14]About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.	Everything is lost
4	[15]He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.	The great sin
5	[16]The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.	Total rejection
6	[17]"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!	A change of mind
6'	[18]I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,[19]and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."	A change of heart An initial repentance
5'	[20]"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.	Total acceptance

[1] Notes:

1. The stanza numbering (column 1), indentation (column 2), and thematic commentary (column 3) are used by Kenneth Bailey to distinguish between scenes in the narrative and parable.
2. The literary forms were imposed on the text by either Jesus, or the author writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
3. These inspired literary forms were intended by the source/author to draw our attention to the key teachings of the narrative and parable.

4’	[21]His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’	The great repentance
3’	[22]“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet.	Everything restored, son reinstated
2’	[23]And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast,	Goods used for celebration
1’	[24]for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.	A son is found

[25]“Meanwhile, the **<u>older son</u>** was in the fields working.

1	When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house,[26]and he asked one of the servants what was going on.	He comes
2	[27]‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’	Your brother safe A feast
3	[28]“The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him,	A father comes to reconcile
4	[29]but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends.	Complaint 1
4’	[30]Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’	Complaint 2
3’	[31]“His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours.	A father tries to reconcile
2’	[32]We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’	Your brother safe A feast
1’	*** No final stanza provided by Jesus. The portion of the story has no ending. ***	

Inversed Parallel Forms from “The Cross and the Prodigal”, by Kenneth E. Bailey

Parable Worksheet

Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-24

LOSTNESS

Main Characters:

Main Events/Scenes:

Turning Point:

Historical-Cultural Gaps (THEN ⇔ NOW):

Earthly & Heavenly Parallels:

Earthly Principle & Heavenly Principle: