I. A parable of a gracious father

Part 1 — The Younger Son

- He is dishonored, wanted dead.
- His possessions are taken by his son to be waste.
- But when the rebel is making his way back, he sees him far away and begins to run.
- He embraces, and kisses the one who smells like a pig, before any apology is made.
- As the son begins his speech, the father interrupts with, “Quick, bring the robe, ring, sandals, and calf. Let’s celebrate.”

II. What kind of love is this?!

Part 2 — The Older Son

- The father runs to the younger, but he also comes to the self-righteous older son.
- He goes out. He pleads. He corrects. “You must rejoice.”
- And we the readers say, “What kind of love is this?!”
- But when did the father start running to the younger son and pursuing the older son?
- Does God start running when the sinner begin to pray? No! God has been running a long time.

III. And God keeps running

I have two questions for you today:

1) Is your conception of God correct? Is the God of your understanding one who runs to sinners, into their stench, to kiss them and embrace them? Can you rejoice with him, as you must?

2) Are you impressed with his heart? Are you on the same mission as your God? Are you running to find others for his banquet?

Application:

- it helps to think of the story of the Bible as God running to us
- If this is God’s heart, then this communicable attribute should be ours
- The church must continually examine the significance of this parable. Will we be the church of the elder brother or the church of the loving father?