

1. Waking up

- a. “Waking up to a new sunrise. Looking back from the other side, I can see now with open eyes”
- a. I call these “ah-ha!” moments; the lightbulb turns on and understanding permeates the mind
  - . We like to think that this happens at our immersion
  - . I did not have this kind of moment coming up out of the water
  - . It has taken years for me to say, “I can see now with open eyes”
  - . I did understand Jesus sacrificed Himself for me
- a. It is one of these moments that drives us to salvation
  - . We realize who we are in relation to the Almighty (mired in muck)
  - . We realize that our Father has provided the way to redeem us
  - . We realize we must leave where we are and run to him

2. Come to our Senses

- a. We want what we want
- a. Luke 15:11–13 (ESV) 11 And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.
  - . I can’t tell you how much time, effort, and money I have spent on Reckless living
    - a. Before I met Sherril, I was stationed in Iceland for a remote tour (1989-1990)
    - a. We had something called the Icelandic triangle – work, club, gym
    - a. They sold liquor in huge bottles with pumps on them
    - a. My behavior was not limited to Iceland but was part of my chosen lifestyle in the other places I was stationed before that, Alaska and Montana
    - a. When Sherril and I met, I was at a bar
    - a. These verses are the perfect picture of the sinful lifestyle
      - 1. Spending recklessly
      - 2. Living for the moment, thinking only of the pleasure it brings
  - . I needed to come to my senses
- a. Luke 15:14–17 (ESV) 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!’
  - . It wasn’t until my second trip to Iceland (with Sherril and my kids, 1993-1997) that we both said that this was the wrong way to live
  - . God had placed Doug and Stacey in the next quad over (3 buildings placed in the shape of a horseshoe, each with 4 homes). These homes were

designed for the South Pacific; I'm not sure how they made it to the North Atlantic

- . They invited us to a Bible study, we became friends, and then Sherril and I were born again
- . It is easy to see the parallel that Jesus is drawing between this son's life and ours
- . The consequences of sin are eternal
- . We must come to our senses!

- a. Luke 15:18–24 (ESV) 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." 22 But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to celebrate.

- a. I love this mental picture that I have created from this text
- . God, standing far off, watching, waiting for us to "come to our senses"
  - . God, welcoming us home, forgiving us of our reckless living

## 2. Thankful for the Scars

- a. John 20:26–29 (ESV) 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- a. As we identify with the son who came to his senses, we must also identify with Thomas
- . After John shows us this interaction between Jesus and Thomas, he tells us the purpose of the book
  - . John 20:30–31 (ESV) 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
  - . Jesus gave His life so that we could have life eternal
  - . We are familiar with the scars (hands and feet)
  - . "I can see, I can see how you delivered me. In your hands, in your feet, I found my victory"
  - . I see in Thomas' response, the "ah-ha!" moment – "My Lord and My God"
  - . I see (in my mind) Thomas' unbelief turning into belief as he touches Jesus' scars

- . I'm sure Thomas would be singing, "I'm thankful for the scars"
  - a. Jesus' sacrifice (the very death that created the scars) is the vehicle of our salvation
    - . Romans 3:23–26 (ESV) 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
      - a. Propitiation – means of expiation
      - a. Expiation – the act of making atonement
      - a. Atonement – the reconciliation of God and mankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus
      - a. Reconcile – to restore
      - a. We have been **restored** to a father-son relationship with the Almighty God who created the universe and everything in it
    - . There are no other religions where a (so-called) god would sacrifice his only unique son (himself) for his creation
      - a. As we are created in the very image of God, we tend to create false gods in our image
      - a. "Zeus was well known for his amorousness—a source of perpetual discord with his wife, Hera—and he had many love affairs with both mortal and immortal women. In order to achieve his amorous designs, Zeus frequently assumed animal forms, such as that of a cuckoo when he ravished Hera, a swan when he ravished Leda, or a bull when he carried off Europa."
      - a. You can find very human versions of most false gods
      - a. You can find the Almighty God in human form as well
      - a. John 1:1 (ESV) 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
      - a. John 1:14 (ESV) 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
      - a. Hebrews 4:14–16 (ESV) 14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
    - . Only the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, would love mankind so much that He would reconcile a lost people back to Himself
      - a. Are you thankful for the scars?
2. With My Life

- a. “I'm thankful for Your scars 'cause without them, I wouldn't know Your heart.  
And with my life, I'll tell of who You are. So forever I am thankful”
- a. Because God gave us eternal life at the cost of His Son, we share that blessing  
with all those around us
- a. Are you thankful for the scars?