

Home is where the heart is. We know that because we know when we're really home and we feel relaxed and contented, happy to be in a place where we can relax and 'put our feet up'. However, this is only an emotional feeling of being home. Deep inside all of us there's actually something wrong, but we won't find it unless we stop being busy with life, sit and become philosophical by thinking about the big issues such as "Why am I here?" and "What's the meaning of life?" When we do that for some time we get past the present focus of our desires, longings and yearnings, and we discover there's this deep-down sense of alienation and cosmic loneliness within us. Normally, this realization only comes to mature adults, late in life.

This feeling is explored by Baxter Kruger in his small book, "Home". The writer of his Forward states:

*"We crave ever deeper satisfaction, and fail to recognise our restless and insatiated condition for what it is – a form of existential homesickness. Where, then, is home? What is the source of the "inconsolable dream" which plagues us in the midst of our dislocation and lostness? Dr. Kruger leaves us in no doubt about its identity. Home is not so much a place, but a set of relationships within which we properly belong (and indeed within which we actually exist whether our lifestyle acknowledges and reflects the fact or not) – namely our identity as sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father, brothers and sisters of an eternal Son who has made our lot his own in order to share his Father's love with us in our orphaned state, and recipients of a Spirit who grants us the faith to embrace our filial inheritance with both hands and rejoice in it. This is where we truly belong, and until it is also where our heart is, we shall continue to be restless and dissatisfied, living a lie and unable to quench the existential thirst which it creates."*¹

Independent of Baxter, I have discovered that when we're spiritually reborn, we're adopted into Father's family, and we're back home. We're back where Adam originally was, at home in Father's family, exactly where we were created to be. It's where we belong. Yippee! Time for a party.



This revelation for me has come about while I've continued my journey of maturing as a son. What's occurred to me is that I'm more and more drawn by Father into understanding that our life in the Kingdom is all about being home in his family. That's Father's perspective and it's the essence of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Check out what Jesus said about the joy in Heaven when a person repents (turns to 'God'²)³ :

1 – Baxter Kruger (???) "Home" perichoresis.org/collections/ebooks/products/home p:4

2 – 'God': I use this term in inverted commas because 'God' is the generic term people use, while I don't any more. I have an intimate relationship with the members of the Trinity, so I refer to them by name out of relationship.

3 – That's what 'repentance' really means in NT Greek.

READ: canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/the-right-place-for-repentance.pdf

Luke 15:10 (TPT⁴) – *That’s the way God responds every time one lost sinner repents and turns to him. He says to all his angels, ‘Let’s have a joyous celebration, for the one who was lost, I have found!’*⁵

The ‘good news’ is really about coming back into Father’s family, not about being saved from sin and from punishment. Even though it’s through salvation that we enter the Kingdom, it’s not supposed to be our focus – The Kingdom is.

The parable of the lost son (‘the prodigal son’) highlights this. Although I was taught through many sermons over my lifetime that the story was about salvation, that wasn’t Jesus’ intention. It’s not about salvation from sin, it’s actually about the concept of living in Father’s family as sons – those who are already there and those who were lost to him and have come back in.

Unfortunately, many Christians are like the older brother who was ‘miffed’ with his father’s treatment of the returning son. He couldn’t see the joy and the party that was in his father’s heart now that his younger son had come home. He was bitter and resentful, even though everything his father owned was his. That lack of joy and happiness is present in countless believer’s lives because they don’t understand the reality of their “conversion”. I know, I used to be like that.

Bob Bell calls this attitude “the gospel of the goat” (it’s the wrong gospel) after the elder son’s complaint at not having feasts of roasted goat with his friends. Goats are learn animals and they don’t have much meat on them compared to a “fatted calf”. Here’s what Rob says about this lack of understanding of the joy of being home with father where we belong”

“The younger brother believes that he is cut off, estranged, and no longer deserves to be his father’s son, because of all the terrible things he’s done. His badness is his problem, he thinks. He’s blown the money on meaningless living until he was face down in the gutter, dragging the family name through the mud in the process. He is convinced that his destructive deeds have put him in such a bad state that he doesn’t even deserve to be called a son any more.

Now, the older brother believes that the reason he deserves to be a son is because of all of the good he’s done, all of the rules he’s obeyed, all of the days he’s “slaved” for his father. His goodness is to his credit, he thinks.

The younger brother’s wrongs have led him away from home, away from the family, deep into misery. This is true. His sins have separated him from his father.

The second truth, one that is much more subtle and much more toxic as well, is that the older brother is separated from his father as well, even though he’s stayed home. His problem is his “goodness”. His rule-keeping and law-abiding confidence in his own works has actually served to distance him from his father.

What we learn in his speech to his father is that he has been operating under the assumption that his years of service and slaving were actually earning him good standing with his father.

*He thinks his father loves him because of how obedient he’s been. He thinks he’s deserving because of all the work he’s done. He thinks his father owes him. Our badness can separate us from God’s love, that’s clear. But our goodness can separate us from God’s love as well. Neither son understands that the father’s love was never about any of that. The father’s love cannot be earned, and it cannot be taken away. It just is. It’s a party, a celebration, an occasion without beginning and without end. It goes on...”*⁶

We must fully comprehend life in Father’s family. That’s the only way we can live it to the full, in the abundant life that Jesus said it is.

4 – The Passion Translation

5 – This quote is the end of the parable of the lost coin. **Translator’s footnote:** The silver coin had an image of Roman authority on it. We have been stamped with the image of God. Even when we are “lost,” that image is still present, needing only to be “found” and redeemed by grace. (classic.biblegateway.com/passages/?search=Luke+15%3A10&version=TPT)

6 – Rob Bell (2011) “Love Wins: At the Heart of Life’s Big Questions” [Kindle: page 185-187]
www.amazon.com.au/Love-Wins-Heart-Lifes-Questions-ebook/dp/B004TAAKCC

We must see the joy, benefits and the family “party” or we short-change ourselves. Religion has actually stolen the benefits of the Kingdom, putting them off until we die. We need to get them back, along with the abundant (overflowing) life that’s rightfully ours.

If we don't get back the real understanding of Father’s family, we won't be able to present the right invitation to others to join us. We also won't be able to properly encourage believers who are struggling with life because they are focussed on the wrong thing – their problems and issues, not home.

The Shack⁷ really brings out the joy and pleasure of being in Father’s family. It’s worth watching the movie again just to get a taste of that enjoyment.



This is not a new doctrine. It’s how things are and how we’re to function.

This is not an allegory. Like ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ or ‘The Path’, this concept is real. It’s the way it was at creation, and it's been restored by the achievements of The Son as Jesus of Nazareth. Look at his life. It was totally about a relationship with Father and his teachings were about getting us there too. His teaching was also about the Kingdom of Heaven, but that wasn't a dichotomy. That was the operational side of our restoration. He brought us home to live our lives with Father in relationship and that’s where we begin our apprenticeship as sons. Our lives are to mirror his life as a man with his father, Joseph. He lived at home with his earthly dad, going through his carpenter apprenticeship and then working for him until he was 30.

We can miss this family/home reality just as the Israelites did. They thought it was about serving a god like they experienced in Egypt, but it wasn't. Father (most likely The Son) wanted a marriage-like relationship with the nation, but they missed it. He described himself as a husband to them through the OT prophets and described them as whores when they worshipped idols. That’s what religion does – it misses what’s real.

They missed it and so can we. **DON'T!**

Here’s some resources to help you comprehend life in Father’s home:

- **BOOK:** “Home” (Baxter Kruger) perichoresis.org/collections/ebooks/products/home
- **VIDEO:** “Paul Young story – The Shack” [interview with Paul Young] m.youtube.com/watch?v=a_YEoK72YYk
- **ARTICLE:** “The Genius of the Shack” (Baxter Kruger) perichoresis.org/blogs/essays/the-genius-of-the-shack
- **BOOK:** “The Shack Revisited: Participants Guide” (Baxter Kruger) [free e-book] studylib.net/doc/8658875



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Laurence
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(www.CanberraForerunners.org)

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7 – www.amazon.com.au/The-Shack/dp/B06XRQMS9Z