



SERMON GROUP LINK

BRADY HERBERT | "PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS"

Harris Creek Baptist Church

June 15, 2014

LIFE GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

In preparation for group discussion, take a few minutes to read through the instructions to the right.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

SERMON TEXT:

Luke 15:11-32

OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 15:1-2

BEFORE LIFE GROUP

1. Spend time in prayer and studying the passage.
2. Listen to the sermon and take notes. Write down questions you had while listening to the sermon.
3. Read through all of the material.
4. Write down two or three ways to apply the passage to your daily life.

DURING LIFE GROUP

1. Summarize the sermon in your own words. Ask other group members to do the same.
2. Ask someone to read the text for the group.
3. Lead your group through the discussion questions, asking the ones that are relevant to your group. Supplement some of the discussion with your own thoughts and follow-up questions.
4. Share how you might be able to apply the sermon to your everyday life.
5. Close with a time of prayer, asking God to increase the depth of our relationship with Him and our obedience to what we learned.

SERMON RECAP

When you think about the parables Jesus told, the most popular and well-known of all of his stories is "The Parable of the Two Sons" in Luke 15:11-32 (also known as "The Parable of the Prodigal Son"). In Luke 15, Jesus tells a series of three parables about things that are lost and later found. With each parable, he intensifies his message and ups the ante. Jesus begins with a story about a shepherd losing 1 out of 100 sheep. When the sheep is found, the shepherd celebrates with his friends. Jesus then tells a second story about a woman losing 1 out of 10 coins. When she finds the coin, she also celebrates with her friends. Finally, Jesus tells a third story that drives home his primary message and intensifies it. He tells a story about a father who loses 1 out of 2 sons. It started with a story about 1 out of 100, then 1 out of 10, and now 1 out of 2. It started with a story about a lost animal, then lost money, and now a lost child. With all of the similarities between these three parables, Jesus throws in a few unexpected twists to this final parable to communicate his message clearly. The story doesn't end with celebration when the lost son is found, like the other two stories do. The story then turns to the older brother who is furious that his father is throwing a party for this rebel son. By breaking the established pattern and shocking our sensibilities and expectations, Jesus teaches us many profound truths about the mercy, grace, and love of our Heavenly Father. Perhaps the shock and unexpected turns are why this parable has been called the greatest short story in the history of the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. "The Parable of the Two Sons" (or "Prodigal Son") has been called the most famous of Jesus' parables and the greatest short story in history. Why do you think this story stands out above the rest of Jesus' parables? How does Jesus' story of rebellion and grace resonate with the common narrative of humanity, or better yet, how does it resonate with your own story?
2. Acknowledging the surrounding context is important for reading Scripture. For Luke 15, what is the connection between the three "lost" parables Jesus tells in Luke 15? Why do you think Jesus tells them in a series the way he does?
3. Unlike the first two parables in Luke 15, the father does not go out and search for his lost son (despite the fact that a son is obviously more valuable than a sheep or coin). Why do you think Jesus changes this detail in this third parable? What does this communicate theologically about our relationship with our Heavenly Father?
4. When the younger son decides to return home, Luke 15:17 says "he came to himself." Why is this phrase so important? How does our rebellion cause us to actually *lose* our *true* identity rather than "discover ourselves" or "be who we truly are"?
5. What was the older son's responsibility in this culture when the younger son rebelled? What does his silence communicate?
6. It was said that the twist in this parable is that Jesus focuses on the "lost-ness" of both sons by comparing the two. What are some similarities Jesus shows between the brothers? (Note: compare verses 15 and 25, verses 19 and 29, verses 20 and 28 for examples) What is the spiritual point Jesus seems to be making about the rebelliousness of both sons?
7. What did you take away from this weekend's message? How do you feel led to respond?