

CANCELLED

5 Week series on FORGIVENESS

Week 3 - Luke 15:11-32

English Standard Version

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

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. 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! 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.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question:

Share about a time when you were overly confident but it resulted in embarrassment.

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Luke 15:11-32.

Forgiveness - is a promise not to keep a record of wrongs against someone.

This week we are focusing on the Younger Brother/Prodigal Son.

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. This week we are focusing on the younger brother. Do you think it was fair for him to ask for his inheritance from the father? Why or why not?

- a. Can you think of a time when you made a request and received a surprisingly unwanted answer? How did you respond?

Leader Context:

- As a reminder, different people will have different perspectives on this question.
 - Examples: "I think it was fair," "I think it was brazen," "I think the worst thing the father could have said was 'yes.'" "The younger brother was not set up to manage his inheritance well."

2. How does the father respond to the younger brother asking for his inheritance? What does that teach us about how God responds to our own requests?

- a. Recently, what prayer or request have you made known to God that has been the hardest to wait for His response?

Leader Context:

- Sometimes a "yes" from God does not turn out the way we want it.
- Sometimes a "no" from God actually helps us in the long run.
- We ask God questions and make prayer requests, not for His "yes" or "no." We ask God because it is how we develop our relationship with God.

3. Luke tells us in verse 17 that the turning point was when the younger son "comes to himself" (came to his senses). Why do you think God allows us to learn through hard times? Why is this process essential to our life?

- a. What moment in your life has changed your trajectory or perspective, and helped you recognize God's love for you, as his child?

Leader Context:

- This principle of learning through trials is common in scripture.
- James 1:2-4 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."
- Hebrews 5:13-14 says, "for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."
- We are all broken human beings who need trial and error to learn. With wisdom however, we can learn through the trial and error of other people. And yet, we all must experience trials from time to time.

BECOME

Prayer: *Jesus, I ask for your forgiveness and mercy. Help me to truly understand and accept your unconditional love and grace. Grant me the strength to let go of guilt and shame, and to forgive myself as you have forgiven me. Help me to see myself through your eyes, as a beloved child of God, worthy of love and forgiveness. Thank you for your endless compassion and mercy. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Next Step: *Spend some time this week praying and writing down specific wounds, incidents or actions of those names you listed last week. Begin working through what you need to forgive through prayer.*