

Storied Everybody Hates a Cliff Hanger- Session #3 Small Group Notes

Introduction:

What does the phrase, “there’s no place like home...” mean to you? When has there been a time that you were homesick? Maybe as a child when you “went away” for the first time, or as an adult on a business trip, or a soldier on deployment.

When a family member has been away for a while, how do you respond when they return?

Discuss: Read Luke 15:11-32

1. The Contrast of the Brothers

- Rebel vs Rule follower
- Lust vs Law
- Left home vs Stayed home

Explain: The son’s request for his inheritance was like telling his father, “I wish you were dead.” Inheritance comes when someone passes away; therefore, the son implied that he thought his father was worth more to him dead than alive. The father would have been heartbroken by the request, but he let the son have his wish and leave. Much like we do today, the son made idols out of the things his father could give instead of loving his father.

Ask:

What are some characteristics that you see that would describe the younger brother? Is there an example that you see of the younger brother today in our culture?

Has there ever been a time in your life when you got something and totally wasted it? As a parent, has there been a time when you saw a child waste something you had gotten them?

How did it make you feel to see someone not appreciate the gift that you gave them? What are ways that we are seeing our culture squandering the blessings of God?

2. The Comparisons of the Brothers

- Both committed murder: Younger brother told the dad he was dead to him, the older brother had hate towards his younger brother
- Both believed a lie: Forgiveness is only available to those that deserve it.

Explain: Forgiveness is our greatest need and God's greatest provision. It is God's joy to welcome us. The prodigal reminds us of how gracious God has been to all forgiven sinners. Regardless of the depth of sin, every Christian is a product of amazing grace.

Self-righteousness is a dangerous sin. If allowed to run its course, it convinces us that we don't need God. The elder brother is the poster child for self-righteousness. We need to constantly examine our attitudes, for an elder-brother attitude can develop in each of us. Struggling against becoming self-righteous is a constant battle.

Ask:

Considering that this younger brother more than likely had a Jewish background, that viewed pigs as unclean; how was this humiliating to the younger brother? How did the older brother seem humiliated?

When has there been a time in your life that the Lord had to humble you?

How does understanding the forgiveness of God help you in a conflict with someone else?

3. The Lavish Love of the Father

- The Younger Brother knew of the feast at home
- The Older Brother struggled to understand the unconditional love
- Both saw the lavish love of the Father

Spend time in reflection about your fellowship with the Lord. Are you asking the Lord to give you things (rebellion) or to make you into things (brokenness)?

What is one thing that you can do this week to allow the Lord to transform you more into His image? What is something that needs to be removed from your life that is hindering this in you?

Why did the father respond the way he did? What does this teach us about God?

How did the father offer grace to the older son as well? What does this teach us about God?

With whom do you identify in the story of the lost son and rejecting brother? Why?