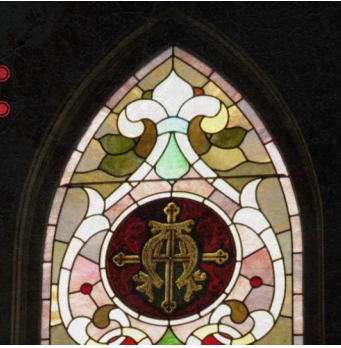


CHRISTIAN:

it's not what you think



LUKE 15:11-32

context:

line by line:

application:

Angry Birds
5.19.2013

Study Questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus embodied the tension between grace and truth. Churches and Christians should too, but they tend to swing toward one or the other. It's easy to be a church of truth or a church of grace—to be conservative or liberal. But when churches take either of those routes, we can sense that something is wrong, something's missing.

WEEKLY READING

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate." (Luke 15:20b–24)

Wherever Jesus went, he was followed by tax collectors and sinners—all the worst people in his society. The marginalized, messed-up, and hated flocked to Jesus. People who were nothing like him, liked him. Imagine if, today, people like that flocked to the church. They should. If the church acted like Jesus, they would.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day complained that all these sinners were always around him. They assumed his proximity to these sinners meant that he condoned their sin. But Jesus never worried about being found guilty by association. Instead, he fully embodied God's truth and God's grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Read Luke 15:11-32 out loud together.** Most of us are familiar with the parable of the prodigal son. Did Dwain's message give you a different perspective on the story? If so, talk about what you learned.
2. When you read the story of the prodigal son, do you relate more to the behaving or misbehaving brother? Why?
3. Do you worry that when the church welcomes sinners, it appears to condone sin? How should the church manage that tension?
4. **Read Romans 3:23–24.** What insight do these verses provide about the Pharisees and sinners in the crowd listening to Jesus?
5. Think of a person who needs your grace. What can you do to soften your heart toward that person and demonstrate God's love?

MOVING FORWARD

If the church is to embody both truth and grace as Jesus did, we can't respond to repentant sinners with the self-righteous disgust displayed by the Pharisees. Like Jesus, sin should break our hearts because it breaks people. Repentance should stir our hearts. We should do everything we can to make it easy for those who are turning to God.

PRAYER

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." **Luke 15:10**

Pray that we would be able to be a church that embodies grace and truth -- so that we are people who live "eternal" life. That means we act and respond in this world the way Jesus says the beings of heaven respond to people of this world.

