

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Mar 31, 2019



Pastor Conway 8:15, Pastor Temple 9:30, 10:55

## Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on Living in a Dry Land?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener Question: How old were you when you first left home? Where did you go and what did you do? Were you ready emotionally and spiritually to leave home? (questions by Lyman Coleman)

## Review the Sermon (15 min)

Because the scripture reading is longer than usual this week, the main scripture text is too lengthy to be contained here. A volunteer is invited to read Luke 15:11-32 from their own Bible or from the additional third page that is provided in this week's sermon discussion guide. As you move through the group discussion, know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Who was Jesus sharing the parable of the Prodigal Son with? (you'll have to look up 15:1-2 separately)
- How were both of these groups represented in the parable that was told? How was each challenged by the parable?
- How was the younger Son being disrespectful in his initial request (verse 12-13)?
- How can the desperation that comes with hitting rock bottom be a blessing (verse 17)?
- How is verse 20 a picture of our Heavenly Father's posture toward any of his children that choose to repent and seek him?
- How do you explain the older brother's reaction to the party held in honor of the younger son's return in verses 28-30?

## From other readings (10 min)

- Coincidentally, today's reading in the *Listen To Him* daily devotional that Christ Church has recommended also covers the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke. In "Don't Settle to Be A Servant" in the fourth Sunday of Lent, author J.D. Walt points out the contrasts between the identities of servant and son. When looking at the experiences and dialogues with the father of both the younger son and the older son the following ironic identity shifts are noticeable:
  - The younger brother knew he was a son though he lived in a far off country, the older brother had forgotten he was a son though he lived in his father's house
  - The younger brother knew he needed mercy, the older son felt he deserved a celebration (he knew nothing about mercy)
  - The younger brother was willing to forfeit his sonship in order to be a servant, the older brother actually did forfeit his sonship in order to be a servant
  - The younger brother never imagined getting a celebration, the older brother could not bring himself to go to the party
  - Both sons were lost, though only one knew it and only one son was found.
- How have we settled for being servants of God and not sons and daughters of the Father?
- What is the difference?
- Please read aloud Matthew 4:1-4
- In the Land Without Borders study, Dr. John A Beck lifts up the topic of wilderness and forgiveness when Jesus was tempted by the devil to make bread out of stones after being in the wilderness for 40 days with no food.
- How did Jesus deal with the temptation to serve self over the relationship and mission of the Father?
- How did Jesus stay true to his relationship with the Father as Son in ways that the Prodigal Son did not with his father when he left home?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Whose struggles do you more readily identify with and why:
  - The younger son who experienced great loss because of out of control living but came to his senses and returned?
  - The older brother who stayed home but whose judgmental attitude kept him from joining in the party?
  - The generous Father who suffered the loss of a son he allowed to leave and then gained him back in his return?
- What steps can we take this week to live into the relationship of son or daughter of God and not just servant?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- Is there someone you know who has left their church home who might welcome an invitation to return? Who might you share a holy week invitation card with? (see cards on welcome table)
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.

## **Luke 15:11-32**

**<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.**

**<sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ <sup>20</sup> So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be**

**called your son.’ <sup>22</sup> “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. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.**

**<sup>25</sup> “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup> ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup> “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup> “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”**