



GROUPS AT CROSS POINT

BREAKING THE ICE

What is the best birthday party you ever had growing up? What made it so special?

If you were to throw a party for a friend, who would it be and why?



MAIN CONTENT

On Sunday, Annie F. Downs taught about the parable of the lost son from Luke 15:11-24. Take some time to re-read the scripture.

1. What is one thing that stood out to you from the message this week?

In Luke 15, we are reminded that Jesus is telling three parables to a group of people that include the sinners, tax collectors, pharisees and the teachers. What we've learned about the setting of the teaching of these parables is the pharisees and the teachers did not like the sinners and tax collectors. In essence, Jesus has a group of people sitting around the table that would suggest they did not belong in the same friend group.

2. Have you ever felt like you did not belong with a group of people? Why did you feel that way?

As we read through the parable of the lost son, we realize this parable has three main characters: the oldest son, the father and the younger son.





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The younger son started down a path of destruction. When he left his father's house for his idea of bigger and better things, he made small, bad choices that led to a lifestyle he was not proud of. He may have even found himself saying, "How did I get here?"

3. Have you ever done something you were not proud of? Did the small thing lead to bigger things where you found yourself some place you never thought you would be? Explain.

We will never be perfect. Because we are sinners, there is no sin that is out of reach. We can do the worst things that we never thought we would do, but Jesus always welcomes us home just like He did with the sinners and tax collectors.

No matter how far we feel from where we should be, there is no gone that is too far gone. Just as the father welcomes his son home in the parable, Jesus will always welcome us home.

4. Have you had a "welcome home" moment with Jesus or with others that you want to share?

Maybe you resonate with the father in the parable of the lost son; you have a friend, family member or even a spouse that is living a destructive path and all you want to do is for them to come home.

5. Do you have someone in your life you have been praying would "come home?" Explain.

Just as the father in the parable never gave up on his younger son, he did not give up on the older son either. The older son was just as lost as the younger son.

The older brother forgot he was a son; all the work he had done for his father made him feel like a slave. He thought he deserved better; he worked hard, had done all the right things. He was focused on his good works and not being a son to his father.





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6. Where have you played the role of the older son in your life?

We can get in a routine of always doing what we think is right. We start working hard and forgetting that we are God's children and that we still need Him.

Jesus never gives up on us. He wants all of the lost sons and daughters to come to Him. He wants us to go to Him with our prayers and concerns for those who are lost, physically and/or spiritually, in our lives. He wants us to run to Him when we've lost our way. He wants us to need Him and have a relationship with Him instead of doing it all on our own. He wants us to welcome those home when they have been lost.

There is no better place than near the father.

7. Which character in the story do you resonate with the most? The father, the older son or the younger son? Why?

Jesus will never give up on the lost. No matter how long we have known Him and think we deserve more than others, no matter how far from Him we have gone. He is never far from us.

8. Is there a situation in your life where you need to play the role of the father? Explain.

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PRAYER

Thank you, God, that you are our Father. You are always welcoming us with open arms; whether we've played the older son and had a bad attitude towards others or been the younger son, making wrong decisions. Will you change our hearts to welcome others home who are lost? Where we have let sin and circumstances overcome our lives, will you help us come back to you? Will you help us be like the father in the story, and love all those that are lost and continue to pray for those who need you. In Jesus name, Amen!

ACTION STEP

This week continue to pray for the lost, those who are close to you and those in Nashville who need to find God.

Ask God to reveal to you where your heart needs to change and be open to welcoming others back to Him.

Continue to pray for the lost in Nashville and that they will come to know Jesus throughout the last week of Awaken.

**Much of today's message was inspired by the book "Prodigal God" by Tim Keller.*
