
Prodigal God: The Feast of the Father
March 27-28, 2010 – Week 6
John 12:12-19

“Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this one of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.” Luke 15:23-24

Notes:

The Feast of Salvation is:

“Jesus tells us that both the sensual way of the younger brother and the ethical way of the elder brother are spiritual dead ends. He shows us there is another way: through him. And to enter that way and to live a life based on his salvation will bring us finally to the ultimate party and feast at the end of history.” “The Prodigal God,” pg 132

Quick Review

Jesus rides triumphantly in victory into Jerusalem, but for the last time. He has come to prepare a feast, Passover, but Passover is just a foreshadowing of the great feast of heaven that Jesus has come to make available to all who will believe. Thinking back, what was one point that provided you with great hope? Was there any part that left you with questions?

Small Groups

Getting to Know Each Other

1. After experiencing a bad winter in Iowa, if you had to pick one event to do in the summer what would it be?
2. What is the greatest family event or meal in which you have ever participated? Give details of feelings, food, people, and any other memories from that event.
3. If you were to create a party environment what would you include and what would you definitely leave out?

Into the Bible

1. What images come to mind when you think about “home”?
Read the following Bible verses. Discuss what coming “home” is like for us as Christians.

Hebrews 11:14-16

Revelation 7:16-17

2. The message talked about the feast of Salvation having four different dimensions to it: experiential, material, individual and communal. Look and discuss what God’s Word says about each one of the following dimensions.
 - Experiential: “A feast is a place where our appetites and our sense-of sight, smell, sound, and taste-are filled up.” (p. 106)

Psalm 34:8

Luke 24:40-43

- Material: “A meal is a very physical experience.” (p. 110)
Jesus left us the Lord’s Supper as a foretaste of the feast to come. Isaiah 29:18-20 Matthew 26:26-29

- Individual: “In order to survive and grow, individuals must eat and drink regularly. That’s what we must do with the gospel of the grace of God.” (p. 114)

John 15:9-17

Acts 2:38-41

- Communal: “Feasting is communal by nature. No reunion, family gathering, wedding, or other significant social event is complete without a meal.” (p. 124)

Hebrews 10:23-25 1 John 1:3-4

Application

1. As we have read and heard in this series of messages the word prodigal has been redefined. We have always known the younger son as prodigal; he left home to live his life with no thought as to anyone but himself. But in this book God has been given the title of prodigal. Is it hard to see God’s love for you as reckless or prodigal? Why?
2. We have been asked to take a look at the things that we do and try to understand why we do them. Are the beliefs and attitudes that we exhibit ones that God would approve of to further his Gospel? If not, think of a plan to change and challenge yourself to sow the seeds of faith differently.
3. How does knowing “God loves us freely, despite our flaws and failures” and you were “bought at a price” affect how you live your life? Do you desire to seek out God everyday? Do you desire to serve his people? What is your motivation for doing these things?
4. God desires us to be in relationship with him and with his people, critique the following statement: “I don’t need to worship God in church. I can go out on the lake and be with God.” How might this be beneficial and how might it hinder our spiritual growth?
5. As a group read pages 95 to the top of page 98. Do you agree with the author that the human race is “a band of exiles?” How is the world not quite right for us?
6. If you had to name one thing that you learned in this series that you never want to forget, what would it be? Why?
7. Is there anything from chapter seven in the book that you wanted to discuss with the group? Is there anything from the book that you wanted to talk about?

Prayer

Pray that God continues to work in your heart concerning this message of salvation and long for a true home.

Family Groups Into the Bible

Read *Revelation 7:16-17*

Application

Ages 2-11

1. If you were going to have a party and invite Jesus what would you serve to eat or drink?
2. Jesus wants to be a part of your life. Think of a couple of different ways that you can spend time with Jesus everyday.

Ages 12-18

1. Jesus is throwing a party for you and your friends. Will you attend or will you be busy with other things? Will you and your friends find an excuse not to go? Why?
2. Is there a difference between a good excuse and a bad excuse? How do you feel when you receive an excuse from someone else? Compare this with how you feel when you give an excuse.
3. What are some excuses you or others might say or have said that keep you from church, youth group events, daily devotions or witnessing to others?
4. Make a commitment now to stop making excuses and begin to build your relationship with Jesus.

For Families of all ages

Discuss things you’ve learned from “The Prodigal God” series that you can put into practice, such as, daily devotions, worshipping together, witnessing to friends at school or neighbors, living your faith by your actions, etc.

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for all of the goodness you pack into our lives. Help us not make excuses, but join the celebration that you have prepared for us as a homecoming. Help us to look upon others with the same love that you have shown us. Amen.