

Reflection Questions: Luke 15:11-24

For the message, "The Embrace of God" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on January 16, 2022

These discussion questions are designed primarily to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life.

You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion.

To review the sermon, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Luke 15:11-24

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them"....

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' "

20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

Bottom Line:

- The Father's embrace means there is always grace greater than our sin.
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Let's get started with our discussion....

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- What do you find most interesting about the story Jesus tells in verses 11-24 in response to the grumbling of the religious leaders in verses 1-2?
- Do you find it easy to believe that God is like the father in the story Jesus told who embraces lost sons & daughters, or hard to believe? Why? When do you find it easier to believe this? When do you find it harder?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- What would a community of faith be like if its participants were truly stunned at the grace of God lavished upon us in Christ, like this father lavished his grace upon his once lost son? Describe what it would be like to be around this kind of community.
- What is the cost if we are not transformed by this text? In other words, what is lost if we ignore the message? What becomes of our community of faith?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- How does this text help us understand God's mission in our city, and what our mission should be? How might this example of Jesus in verse one challenge you and stretch you to broaden your view of what he might be able to do through you if you were around some of the misfits and outcasts and "sinners" of our city?
- Probably many people in our community believe in some sense that God is love. How do you think translating that belief into a story like this would make? In other words, how might this story work and get behind a person's defenses and touch them in a way that the phrase "God is love" might not?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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