

Message Study Guide

(Scriptures & quotes from this week's message are available on thorncreek.church/live)

Warming up

1. Have you ever considered how much we have an "Us and them" perspective? In what ways do we have this kind of attitude? Share with your group.

Digging Deeper & Application

Take your time reading the scripture given. If possible look up the verses in different versions and pause at each verse and discuss it.

2. Please read Luke 15:1-2. Who was Jesus sitting with, and who was criticizing Him?
3. There are two groups that are in this story. The first group are the Tax Collectors and sinners. The second group are the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law. Who are these people and how are they different from each other? Do a little research!
4. The big question is, "How could Jesus sit with them?" One bible scholar said, "The religious leaders of Jesus' day divided humanity into two classes: the unclean and the righteous. They decided to live, as much as possible, in complete separation from the unclean. Some rabbis of Jesus day took this idea so seriously that they refused to teach the unclean God's word." (Morris). What are your thoughts? In what ways has the church or Christians done the same?
5. What message was Jesus communicating when He sat down with Tax Collectors and sinners? Does this mean Jesus was approving their lifestyle in any shape, way, or form?
6. Christine Pohl said, "A shared meal is the activity most closely tied to the reality of God's kingdom, just as it is the most basic expression of hospitality." What is the significance of eating a meal with someone? Find two examples in the gospels where Jesus ate with others.

7. Table fellowship was extremely significant to every Hebrew home. Do you think we have table fellowship much today? Why or why not? What is the consequence?
8. Jesus shattered the rules of association and categories. How is the love and attitude of Jesus different from the Pharisees? Which attitude is in you? Is there evidence?
9. Jesus wanted the Pharisees to understand WHY He was sitting with Tax Collectors and sinners. He shared two parables. Please read Luke 15:3-7. What do you see in this story? Compare it with this quote from this bible scholar, "No creature strays more easily than a sheep; none is more heedless; and none so incapable of finding its way back to the flock, when once gone astray: it will bleat for the flock, and still run on in an opposite direction to the place where the flock is: this I have often noticed." (Clarke). Do we wander like this sheep? Explain.
10. Please read the Parable of the Lost Coin in Luke 15:8-10. What is Jesus teaching about the heart of God in this story? What is He saying about value?

Application

Below are some of the points or quotes shared in the message. Discuss how they apply to your life.

- The love of God is not exclusive.
- The love of God is not restricted.
- The love of God is not prejudiced.
- The love of God is not favoritism.
- Jesus never made fun of people who were genuinely lost.
- Jesus is saying...The irreligious and the religious need the grace of God.