

Discussion Questions

Luke 15:1-2 - Beautiful Friend (chapters 10-12)

Sunday, September 26, 2021

Ice Breaker (Optional. Take just a few minutes on one of the two questions):

- A. Tell a story of an experience you had with a childhood friend.
- B. Describe something/someone you consider beautiful.

Reflecting on the Passage

- 1. Read Matthew 9:9-13. In light of verses 9-12, discuss what v. 13 means.
- 2. In Luke 15:1, it says the tax collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus “to hear him.” What do you think Jesus was saying?
- 3. In Luke 15:2, the Pharisees and scribes grumble, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” The word used for “receive” communicates welcoming as brothers and sisters. In the ancient near east, to eat with someone was an act signifying total, unreserved acceptance. How do you think Jesus did these things from verse 2 while still saying the things from verse 1?

Reflecting on your Life

- 4. Consider the following passages from Gentle and Lowly.
 - a. *“What is it about God’s glory that draws us in and causes us to conquer our sins and makes us radiant people? Is it the sheer size of God, a consideration of the immensity of the universe and thus of the Creator, a sense of God’s transcendent greatness, that pull us toward him? No, Edwards would say; it is the loveliness of his heart”* (pp. 97).
 - b. *“When we come to Christ, we are startled by the beauty of his welcoming heart”* (pp. 98).

How do you react to these two passages? What was it about Jesus that first drew you and attracted you to him?

- 5. Ortlund writes: *“So let the heart of Jesus be something that is not only gentle toward you but lovely to you. If I may put it this way: romance the heart of Jesus. All I mean is, ponder him through his heart. Allow yourself to be allured. Why not build into your life unhurried quiet, where, among other disciplines, you consider the radiance of who he actually is, what animates him, what his deepest delight is? Why not give your soul room to be reenchanting with Christ time and again?”* (pp. 99) What do you think about this advice from Ortlund? How would you put his advice into practice in everyday life?
- 6. Ortlund writes, *“Christ got angry and still gets angry, for he is the perfect human, who loves too much to remain indifferent... But because his deepest heart is tender compassion, he is the*

quickest to get angry and feels anger most furiously – and all without a hint of sin tainting that anger.” (p. 110) How do you react to the idea of Christ getting angry? Why is it we can say that Jesus’s anger is tied in with his compassion?

7. Are you familiar with the term “compassion fatigue”? It’s defined as “indifference to charitable appeals on behalf of those who are suffering, experienced as a result of the frequency or number of such appeals.” What did Jesus do to protect himself from experiencing “compassion fatigue”? If we are to have the heart of Jesus, what does the compassion of Jesus mean for our everyday lives?
8. What makes for a good friendship? What does friendship with Christ look like? What role does mutuality play in friendship with Jesus? What are ways that you cultivate mutuality in your friendship with Jesus?

Deeper into Scripture

9. Read John 11:28-44. In verses 33 and 38, the verb translated “deeply moved” describes an “inner state of deep fury” (p. 110). Why does Jesus feel this way? What does this tell us about Jesus’s anger and his compassion?
10. Read Revelation 3:17-20. Have you ever thought that Jesus invites the you who is “the wretched you, the pitiable you, the poor you, the blind you and the naked you” to enjoy time with him and to spend time with him over supper? Jesus invites the real you – the “you” that you’d never entrust to others – to fellowship with him. What does it mean for you to see Jesus as a friend and especially a “friend to sinners”?

From the bulletin.... ***Kingdom Implications for Your Life:***

11. *To what degree do you know Jesus as a beautiful, wholehearted friend? How can you make time this week for this friendship? How can this friendship influence your other friendships?*

Next week's sermon will tie in to chapters 13-18 in Gentle and Lowly.