



Christianity Illustrated

Storying the Parables of Jesus



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Our Vision

Disciples Making Disciples

Our Mission

Creating Biblical Disciples through Relational Environments

Series Goal

This twelve-part sermon series has two overarching goals...

Our primary goal is to introduce the concept of Biblical storytelling to our small groups. Bible storying can be fun, and inspires confidence in people who not be willing to lead a more traditional Bible study. Everyone can tell a story...what better stories to tell than those from the Master Teacher himself, Jesus Christ.

The secondary goal is to introduce the concept of missional small groups to our church, incorporating missional elements into various stages of this sermon series.

Christianity Illustrated

When Jesus wanted to drive home a point about God, his kingdom and how life worked in the kingdom, he often did it by telling a story. Our prayer is that each small group will discover life changing truths in this new teaching series on the parables of Jesus.

Small Group Schedule

January 8

Overcoming Growth Barriers - Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

January 15

Facing Reality - Luke 16:1-9

January 22

Overcoming Resentment - Matthew 20:1-16

January 29

Defeating Spiritual Complacency - Matthew 25:1-13

February 5

The World's Most Passionate Evangelist - Luke 14:15-24

February 12

Heart-Healing Forgiveness - Luke 7:36-50

February 19

A Reward Worth Living For - Matthew 25:14-30

February 26

What Makes Prayer Powerful - Luke 11:5-13

March 4

The Gamble to Compassion - Luke 10:25-37

March 11

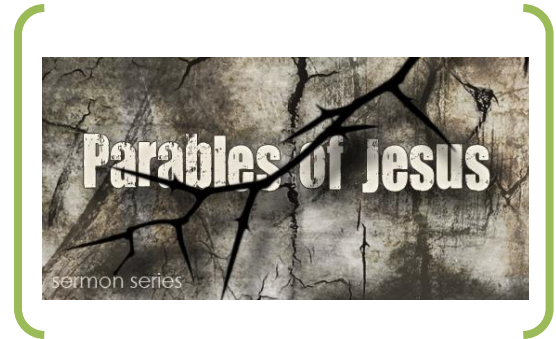
Love for the Rebellious Heart - Luke 15:11-24

March 18

Love for the Bitter Heart - Luke 15:25-32

March 25

Spiritual Sincerity - Matthew 21:28-32



2012 Goals and Objectives

1. To live in the joy of our salvation with Christ.
 - a. Understanding worship
 - b. Develop measurement instrument (survey)

2. 125 People on mission
 - a. Provide Opportunities
 - i. Youth goal - 50
 - b. 10 mission trips with 10 people each
 - i. Guatemala in January / July (Grant / Eckler)
 - ii. Sandusky, OH
 - iii. Portugal (June/October – Gillum)
 - iv. Eastern KY (Clark)
 - c. Develop process of how to capture missional transformation after each trip – video to play on Sunday morning
 - d. Missional Pattern of Small Groups
 - i. Next Nehemiah training will focus on
 1. Relational Pattern
 2. Growth Pattern
 3. Missional Pattern

3. 50 Small Groups
 - i. Current 32
 - ii. Church Wide campaign (GroupLink)
 1. 9 in April
 2. 9 in September
 - b. Intentionality with Small Group Leaders developing apprentices
 - c. Being strategic with Backyard Bible Clubs
 - d. Pray for 2-3 additional coaches to emerge

4. 60 Baptisms
 - a. 2 lost souls coming Christ in every small Group
 - b. Remind Small Groups at every meeting
 - c. Celebrating Every sheep
 - d. Salvation wall in the Sanctuary
 - e. Prayer Team

5. Everyone being able to recite Eastside's vision and mission statement
 - a. Repeating the vision and mission at every meeting
 - b. Not only memorizing the vision and mission but understanding it as well.

Small Group Training: How do I Prepare for a Story?

1. **Pray** that the Holy Spirit would illuminate His truth in your understanding of the Scriptural passage.
2. **Read *three* translations** of the story. Two readings of each translation are recommended. Below is a suggested list of translations:
 - a. English Standard Version (ESV)
 - b. New King James Version (NKJV)
 - c. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
 - d. New Living Translation (NLT)
 - e. New International Version (NIV 1984)
3. **Mirror Time:** Tell the story aloud as if you were telling your small group.
4. **Take notes of each main point** you make.
5. **Review** your notes against the ESV translation and make adjustments in your notes.
6. **Be prepared** to tell the story without looking at your Bible or notes. If possible, tell the story to others.
7. **Initially avoid use of commentaries.** It is important to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God's truth before you look at other resources.
8. **For Parents of School-Age Children:** You can discuss the Family Devotion questions with your child as you go through your day. Bath time, car time, and dinner time are all great times of the day that you can talk to your children about these parables.

Week 1

January 8th, 2012

God's Story: Overcoming Growth Barriers

Matthew 13:1-10, 18-23

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...*the Parable of the Sower*.

Pre-Story Question

When have you recently wrestled with unbelief?

Chronological Questions

1. Why would a farmer allow precious seed to land on the path, or rocks, or among thorns? Is he an irresponsible farmer scattering seeds at random?
2. What happened to each group of seeds?
3. How much of the parable did the people understand? How much did the disciples understand? (13:9-10) Why didn't the people or the disciples understand this parable?
4. Did Jesus design his parables to have trick meanings, hidden meanings, or more than one basic interpretation? Why do some listeners discover the truth in a parable and others do not?
5. Why do you suppose that this was among the first parables that Jesus told?
6. What kind of people today might be represented by the seed that fell on the path? (13:19) Why couldn't those who received the word with joy stay faithful? (13:20-21) What choked those who were represented by the seed that fell among the thorns?
7. What kind of soil do you most resemble right now? What worries or temptations have hindered your growth as a Christian recently?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?

3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. What kinds of ground did the farmer plant the seeds on?
3. Where did Jesus teach the parable in our story today?
4. Why did Jesus speak to the people in parables?
5. Who asked Jesus to explain the parable?
6. What did Jesus say the Seed was?
7. Explain the different kinds of ground that the seed landed on: rocky ground, thorny ground and good ground.
8. Which soil does God want you to be like?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 2
January 15th, 2012
God's Story: Facing Reality
Luke 16:1-9

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Dishonest Manager*

Pre-Story Question

Have you ever rationalized a dishonest behavior?

Chronological Questions

1. Who is the audience for this parable? (Luke 15:1-2, 16:1)
2. Who did the Rich Man's creditors think was being generous to them? Why would the shrewd manager gain from lowering the bills of his master's creditors?
3. After the manager lowered the bills, what choices did the master have?
4. What does "shrewd" mean? Is it bad to be shrewd?
5. Is Jesus commending dishonesty? (16:8)
6. What is Jesus saying about (or to) "the children of the light?" (16:8, Matt 10:16)
7. Why is it so difficult to keep a proper perspective on money? Is there some way that God wants you to change the way you handle your resources? What resources do you have that you can use to help people in need?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?

3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. Who does the rich man represent and who the manager?
3. How many masters are there in the parable?
4. What master was the manager serving?
5. What masters must Christians chose between?
6. Give your children an example of something or someone that has been a master in your life instead of Christ.

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 3

January 22nd, 2012

God's Story: Overcoming Resentment

Matthew 20:1-16

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of Laborers in the Vineyard*

Pre-Story Question

What would happen if God gave each of us what we deserve?

Chronological Questions

1. What do you think of deathbed or death-row conversions to faith in Jesus?
2. What wage was agreed upon by the landowner and workers early in the morning? (Vs 20:2) What wage was agreed upon by those hired later? (Vs 20:4)
3. What explanation did the last group of workers give when asked why they were standing around doing nothing? What else might they have been doing? How do you see this as applying to you or others today?
4. What did the landowner tell the foreman to do at the end of the day? (Vs 20:8)
5. Was anyone underpaid or cheated? Why then did the workers complain? Was anyone overpaid?
6. With which group of workers do you personally identify—with those hired at 9:00 a.m., at noon, at 3:00 p.m., or those hired at 5:00 p.m.?
7. How does it make you feel to know that heaven will include murderers, child molesters, swindlers, and crooked politicians that put their trust in Christ only minutes before their death?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?

3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. How is a person saved? (by faith)
3. What two questions did Jesus answer before He told the parable of the laborers? (Who can be saved? What will be our reward?)
4. What is a parable? (a story that Jesus told to help disciples understand God's ways)
5. What time did the landowner hire his first group of workers? (6 a.m.)
6. What did he agree to pay them? (a denarius)
7. What other times did the landowner hire workers? (9 a.m. noon, 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.)

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 4

January 29th, 2012

God's Story: Defeating Spiritual Complacency

Matthew 25:1-13

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids*

Pre-Story Question

When was a time you were late to an important event? Why were you delayed? Could you have avoided being late? How?

Chronological Questions

1. Why were some of the bridesmaids described as foolish? What made the others wise?
2. What did the foolish bridesmaids ask of the others? How did the wise ones respond when asked to help the ones who had not prepared? Was this fair?
3. In what ways do you tend to count on more mature Christians or ride on their coattails?
4. How did the bridegroom respond when some of the bridesmaids want to come to the wedding late? (Matthew 25:12)
5. What responsibility does each Christian while waiting? (Matthew 25:13, Hebrews 10:23-25, 13:1-5, James 1:22-25, 4:7-10)
6. Why do we tend to think and act like we have all the time in the world before Christ's return?
7. What are the possible consequences of putting off thinking about Christ and spiritual growth until later? Why is continual preparation for Christ's return better than "last minute cramming?"

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?

3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us? (Jesus is teaching us the urgent need for us to always be prepared for His second coming)
2. Who does the Bridegroom represent? (Jesus Christ)
3. Who do the girls represent? (the church; some have a relationship with Christ and some do not)
4. Do you think the five wise brides were selfish when they didn't share their oil?
5. Have you in the past (or present) tried to live off the oil of someone else's faith? If so, who? (parents, friends, church)
6. What two key points did Jesus want the listeners to know about His future return?
7. How does it make you feel that not everyone will enter Heaven?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Missional Focus
#1

Question:

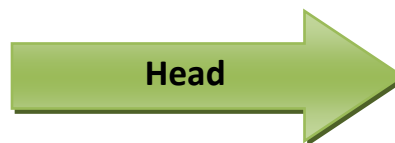
What is a disciple?

Answer:

Matthew 4:19

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

This week we will focus on:



“Follow me,…”

A disciple is someone who *knows* and *follows* Christ.

Is your small group a **missional** small group? What does “*missional*” mean?

A **missional small group** is dedicated to the process of helping each group member (a.k.a., *disciple*) serve others and share their faith. Cultivating a *missional* mindset of small group life occurs in three stages:

1. Exploring
2. Applying
3. Impacting

This week our focus will be on stage 1:

Exploring

Most of our efforts in this stage will simply be on getting to know each other better. Talk about the following questions:

1. How does each member understand and know their spiritual gifts?
2. Does each member understand that their role is to be the hands of Christ, and has a unique assignment for the Kingdom?
3. Has the small group discussed the unique context of ministry in which God has placed each of us? How has our small group served together?
4. Do small group members discuss areas of ministry they have tried out?
5. What percentage of the small group has found an area of ministry to which they are committed?
6. **Read John 5:17-20.** The Son could do nothing without the Father. Do we know the Father well enough to sense where He is working so that we can join Him in His work? What specific areas does God seem to be working through small group members?

Begin to pray that God would show each member of your small group where He is working over the next few weeks. Seek His face. Seek His mind. Seek His eyes. Small group members who are exploring learn that each one of us is intended to be the hands of Jesus to the world.

Week 5

February 5th, 2012

God's Story: The World's Most Passionate Evangelist

Luke 14:15 – 25

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Great Banquet*

Pre-Story Question

How do you feel when you plan a big event and it is poorly attended? What kind of excuses do you most resent others using?

Chronological Questions

1. In Jesus' days, it was customary to send two invitations to a party—the first to announce it and the second to tell the guests that everything was ready. How does this aid in your understanding of the parable?
2. How does the parable of this party (banquet) fit into Israel's history?
3. How did the character of the banquet change given the new guest list?
4. There are many people in this parable: the master, his servant, those invited the first time, the crippled and blind, others on country roads. Who do you identify with and why?
5. What does this parable tell us is the main thing we should fear with respect to attending the banquet, i.e., entering heaven?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. What is your favorite excuse to use when trying to get out of something?
3. Why did the invited guest refuse to come?
4. Who were invited instead? (poor, crippled, blind and lame)
5. What things in our family keep us from spending quality time with God?
6. How would you feel if your friends decided at the last minute to not come to your party that you had planned?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 6

February 12th, 2012

God's Story: Heart-Healing Forgiveness

Luke 7:36-50

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of a Sinful Woman Forgiven*

Pre-Story Question

What does it mean to be forgiven?

Chronological Questions

1. What is the condition of the Pharisees heart as revealed in this passage?
2. How is the sinful woman different from the Pharisee?
3. What point is Jesus trying to make for his dinner host?
4. How did the hospitality of the Pharisee reveal his heart?
5. What is the response of those who understand forgiveness?
6. What should our response be to Christ's forgiveness? Where do we hold back?
7. Who have we withheld the gospel from because of their sin?
8. In light of God's grace in our lives, what would joining his mission look like for us?

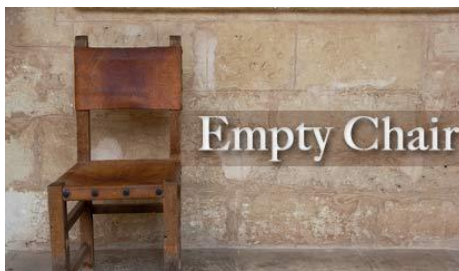
4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. Who is the most affectionate person in your family?
3. Why do you think the woman came to the Pharisee's home? (to ruin the party, to upset the Pharisee, to seek forgiveness)
4. How would you have felt watching the woman anoint Jesus?
5. Who can you identify with in this story? Why? (Woman, Pharisee or Jesus)
6. What is the hardest thing about dealing with sin? (Admitting sin, receiving forgiveness, feeling guilty)
7. What do you need to do to receive forgiveness? (This may be a great place to talk about the plan of salvation with your child.)
8. Sometimes our friends can do things to hurt our feelings; is there something you need to forgive your friends for? (Talking about hurts can help a child learn to forgive others.)

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 7

February 19th, 2012

God's Story: A Reward Worth Living For

Matthew 25:14-30

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Talents*

Pre-Story Question

What are your five best traits or greatest attributes? Where are you able to invest your talents (money and abilities)? What people can benefit most from the talents you have?

Chronological Questions

1. In Verse 25:14, the word "it" refers to the kingdom of heaven. To what did Jesus liken it in this parable?
2. On what basis did the master decide to give different amounts of money to each of the three servants? What was a talent worth? How did the word "talent" come to mean an ability, skill, or aptitude?
3. There are four important elements in this parable: time, money, work, and profit. That seems pretty worldly. What can we say about each element?
4. The master says three things to reward each of the first two servants. They are:
5. What is the main characteristic of the third servant that differentiates him from the first two?
6. What was the third servant's excuse for not investing his talent? How did the master respond to his explanation? (25:24-28)
7. What was the ultimate outcome of the third servant?
8. God rejoices in his servants making a profit. What does a *profit* mean to God?
9. Is it important to God how much talent you have? (2 Corinthians 8:10-12)

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is your favorite subject or activity in school?
2. Do you like to save money or spend money?
3. What did each of the servants do with their money?
4. Which of the three servants in this parable can you relate to?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 8

February 26th, 2012

God's Story: What Makes Prayer Powerful

Luke 11:5-13

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...*The Lord's Prayer*

Pre-Story Question

Do you feel confident when you pray?

Chronological Questions

1. In the analogies that Jesus gives, what is similar about the request being made?
2. What does the image of the loaves teach us about persistence in prayer?
3. How does Jesus portray the Father in his response to our prayers?
4. How does the Father's inclination differ from the sleeping friend?
5. What do these differences teach us about God's willingness to respond to our prayers?
6. In what ways has the Holy Spirit been the greatest gift from God in your life?
7. Recall a time when God answered a prayer and share it with the group.
8. Why does Jesus want us to be persistent in prayer.
9. What do these verses reveal about God's nature? Is this consistent with your view of Him?
10. What are we praying for today?
11. How are those things aligned with the purposes of God?
12. Pray for Jesus to continue to teach us how to pray.

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. Ask your children what they are praying for right now?
2. Do you sometimes pray and God doesn't do what you want Him to?
3. Recite the Lord's Prayer with your child.
4. Encourage your child to continue to pray and ask God for what they need.
5. Make everyone's prayer request visible. Use a dry erase board in your home to write prayer request on. Take time to pray together as a family.

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Missional Focus
#2

Question:

What is a disciple?

Answer:

Matthew 4:19

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

This week we will focus on:



“...and I will make you...”

A disciple is someone who is being *changed* by Christ.

Remember that cultivating a *missional* mindset of small group life occurs in three stages:

1. Exploring
2. Applying
3. Impacting

This week our focus will be on stage 2:

Applying

During this phase of cultivating a missional pattern for your small group, the focus shifts from *head knowledge* to *heart response*. Groups in this phase challenge each other to use their spiritual gifts and begin to serve others outside their community. Finding these opportunities often takes much trial and error, but the joy of the journey far outweighs the cost of the destination.

Here are some ideas to begin *applying* a missional small group mindset:

1. **Serve together:** identify areas where the entire small group can serve together. Get the kids involved. Have fun. Serve.
2. **Adopt a ministry:** identify the interest levels of your small group members, and if there is a certain ministry that keeps coming up, ask the ministry leader how your group can partner with them.
3. **Serve a non-profit:** identify areas where your small group members have a certain passion (e.g., illiteracy, abused women) and get involved. Don't be satisfied to sit on the sidelines when God wants you in the game!

Pray that God would reveal to your small group areas in which your group can serve. *And then be obedient.* We were given faith for a reason – to bring about the obedience that comes from it – to serve others for the glory of God.

Week 9

March 4th, 2012

God's Story: The Gamble to Compassion

Luke 10:25-37

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*

Pre-Story Question

What neighbors does God want us to serve that we walked past?

Chronological Questions

1. What was the intention of the Lawyer who was questioning Jesus? Why is the lawyer hung up on the definition of neighbor?
2. What is the significance of the Samaritan responding with mercy in contrast to the priest and Levite?
3. What lengths did the Samaritan go to help the man in need?
4. How would this parable have challenged the worldview of the lawyer?
5. How do you justify ignoring the practical and spiritual needs of people in your life?
6. Who do we see loving people in the ways that Jesus calls us?
7. How can we go and do likewise as a community group?
8. Pray for opportunities to serve others in our neighborhood and eyes to see them.
9. Pray that Jesus would be made much of because of our presence in this neighborhood.

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?

4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What is this parable teaching us?
2. How can you show love to people in your lives?
3. Have you ever done something kind for a friend?
4. Have you ever shared something with someone who needed it more than you?
5. When you do kind things, who deserves the praise for your kindness? (God, not me)
6. *Agree or Disagree:* Tell the children that you are going to read some statements that might be ways to love your neighbor. Ask them to stand if they agree. If they disagree they should sit down with arms crossed. Relate each example back to the idea of loving your neighbor.
 - a. We should be extra nice to kids at school who have trouble making friends.
 - b. We should obey our parents right away.

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 10

March 11th, 2012

God's Story: Love for the Rebellious Heart

Luke 15:11-24

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word... the *Parable of the Prodigal Son (Part 1)*

Pre-Story Question

When have you felt most like a rebel in your life?

Chronological Questions

1. What is the sin of the younger son?
2. What is the sin of the older son?
3. What attributes of God are revealed in the father? (Any surprises?)
4. Why do you think the older son had such a hard time rejoicing for his brother?
5. How would the audience from verses 15:1-2 have taken this parable?
6. How do you relate to the younger son?
7. How do you relate to the older son?
8. How have you experienced the joyful embrace of the Father?
9. Who is God calling you to forgive or experience joy for the grace they received?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?

4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. What does *prodigal* mean? (To be wayward and wasteful.)
2. What did the prodigal son do with his inheritance? ([Luke 15:12-13.](#)) Why do you think some people decide to live this way?
3. How do you think the father felt while his son was gone? How would you feel if someone in your [family](#) acted like the prodigal son? (Be sensitive to children who might have family members who are not keeping the commandments.)
4. What did the prodigal son do to get food when his money ran out? ([Luke 15:14-16.](#))

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 11

March 18th, 2012

God's Story: Love For the Bitter Heart

Luke 15:25-32

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Prodigal Son (Part 2)*

Pre-Story Question

Have you ever been in a situation when you felt like you were not wanted?

Chronological Questions

1. What did the younger son ask of his father?
2. How do you explain the son's life change?
3. In returning home, what did he fear? Did the father confirm those fears? Explain.
4. What was the older brother's reaction to the return of his brother?
5. How does the father explain his actions?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. Why do you think the son decided to return to his father? ([Luke 15:17-19.](#)) What kind of master was his father? ([Luke 15:17.](#))

2. How did the father feel when his son came home? ([Luke 15:20.](#)) What did he do for his son? ([Luke 15:22-24.](#))
3. How did the older son feel when he learned that his younger brother was home? ([Luke 15:28-30.](#)) Why is it important to continue to love family members who disobey the commandments?
4. What did the father promise the older brother? ([Luke 15:31.](#)) What example did the father set of how to treat those who have sinned but have repented? ([Luke 15:32.](#)) How do you feel when you see someone repent and turn from wrong to right? How should we treat people who have not kept the commandments but who are sincerely sorry?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Week 12

March 25th, 2012

Story: Spiritual Sincerity

Matthew 21:28-32

Transition:

Here is the story from God's Word...the *Parable of the Two Sons*

Pre-Story Question

Why do we so often drag our feet in doing what God wants?

Chronological Questions

1. What is the best illustration—positive or negative—that you've ever seen of the old saying, "*actions speak louder than words*"?
2. Who are the people in the parable? Who did they represent when Jesus told it? Who do they represent today?
3. Was the behavior of either son commendable?
4. Why doesn't religious knowledge or information guarantee that we will do what God wants us to?
5. When, if ever, is it too late to do the right thing? What does it mean to repent? Is it ever too late to repent?

4Q's

1. What do we learn about God in this story?
2. What do we learn about man in this story?
3. What new thing did you discover in this story?
4. What should I do differently because of this story?

Questions for Family Devotions

1. Share with your children of times your parents had to get onto you for not doing what you were told.
2. What does the father ask his sons to do?
3. What does each son say and do? Why?
4. Which son is most like you?

Prayer Requests / Praise Reports



Who should be sitting in yours?

Missional Focus
#3

Question:

What is a disciple?

Answer:

Matthew 4:19

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This week we will focus on:



"...fishers of men."

A disciple is someone who is *on mission* with Christ.

Is your small group ready to identify a project? Remember that cultivating a *missional* pattern of small group life occurs in three stages:

1. Exploring
2. Applying
3. Impacting

This week our focus will be on stage 3:

Impacting

For small groups cultivating at this level, the goal is to maximize impact. Small group members are starting to discover that they have an inner confidence that God has them serving precisely where He wants them. Here are some ideas:

1. **Acts of Regular Kindness (ARK):** as opposed to random acts of kindness, ARK is frequent and purposeful. We proactively *plan* how we can serve others. We intentionally *see* where there is a need and we commit to helping. We see *opportunity* in *inconvenience*.
2. **Support One Another:** members of the small group learn to recognize specifically how they can help each other in their areas of ministry. The small group then becomes a refueling station as each prays and encourages each other in their individual calling.
3. **Go + Tell.** Challenge each member of the group to begin telling others what joy they have found in Christ. This is the best way to show others that we are the salt and light of the world. Take your small group through Bible studies on evangelism or the meaning of the gospel.

Share your successes. Let your ministry leaders know of your success. We want to celebrate how our family members are impacting the Kingdom!

Small Group Training: How Do I Facilitate my Small Group Session?

1. Transition the Story (5 minutes)

This is the compass for determining where we are in God's story. Briefly summarize last week's story and what has happened in between *this week's* and *last week's* story.

2. Pre-Story Question (5 minutes)

Use the Question question before you tell the story. This is a tool to get your people thinking about the theme of the story before it is told. It is helpful to answer the Question question yourself in the group by telling a related personal story to your group, then asking them to think about the question or statement themselves before telling them the story from the Bible.

3. Tell the Story (10 minutes)

Remember to start with, "*Here's the story from God's Word.*" Tell the story as best you can. Try to refrain from teaching; just tell the story. The objective is not to memorize the story, but to learn it and be able to just share it. Remember to end with, "*And that's the story from God's Word.*"

4. Rebuild the Story (10 minutes)

Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (*What happened first? Then, what happened?*). Have the group look for what was added or left out by opening their Bibles and going back over the story.

5. Chronological Questions (10 minutes)

Use these questions during the rebuild phase to expand understanding of the Scriptural passage and facilitate dialogue within the group.

6. 4Q's (10 minutes)

The questions help lock the story in your people's minds and hearts. They are designed to bring your people to a more clear belief about who God really is, who they really are as His people, how they should see the world, and ultimately what we should change in our lives as a result.

7. Retell or Read Scripture (10 minutes)

It is important to emphasize that the stories are coming straight from Scripture. Time permitting, have someone else in your group retell the story at the end, or (preferably), have someone read the Scriptural passage.

8. Encourage Your Members (5 minutes)

Remember that one of our biggest goals for learning God's Word is to equip others to retell the story outside of group time. Encourage your small group members to tell the story as often as possible.

Training Notes

1. Remember to pray *before* and *after* your small group session. Prayer effectively helps the Holy Spirit illuminate truth during your session, and sends your group off with the power of confidence for the upcoming week.
2. As you tell the story, hold the Bible open. Try not to refer to it, but holding it open clearly conveys where the story originates. As you close, clearly indicate that this is a story from God's Word, and then close your Bible.
3. Trust God's Word. Trust that the stories told in the Bible are best told in their entirety as God wrote them.
4. If you see a specific emotion used in the story, try to tell it with the appropriate emotion. Conversely, if there is not an emotion connected to the story, do not add one. This will either help convey the story more accurately or detract from its meaning.
5. Listen to responses. The answers people give will help you to identify where God is working in their lives. This is very important if we are to disciple and be discipled.
6. A great way to remember a story and tell it with more passion is to put yourself in the position of one of the characters. Go back in time and see yourself in the scene, and your memory will be aided come story time.

How Not to Read a Parable

In the parable of the tenants, the owner of the vineyard finally sends his son to collect the fruit that the tenants refused to give to his servants. The tenants had beaten and killed the servants. But the owner says, "They will respect my son" ([Mark 12:6](#)).

This sounds like God, who is represented by the owner, thinks his Son will not be killed but will be well received. This would contradict the truth that God sent the Son precisely to die ([John 10:18](#); [Isaiah 53:10](#)).

So someone might try to argue that [Mark 12:6](#) supports the view that God did not know what would happen to the Son of God when he came.

The usual way of defending the foreknowledge of God and the predestination of the death of Christ by God ([Acts 4:27-28](#)) is to say that parables are not allegories.

That is, every detail of a parable should not be pressed to have a counterpart in the general point the parable is making. True. But in this case we can go farther.

The parable ends, "Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" ([Mark 12:10-11](#)).

In other words, Jesus points out that already in Psalm 118 written hundreds of years before the sending of the Son, the plan was laid out: The Messiah will be rejected, killed, and raised from the dead. And this is all "the Lord's doing."

The death of the Son was not a surprise. It was a plan.

So in the parable itself we are told *not* to construe the owner's words, "They will respect my son," as part of the way God is being represented. That is what a human owner might say. It is incidental to the point of the parable.

What God said, in fact, was: "The builders will reject my Son and I will make him Lord and Christ."

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How do I join a small group?

The simplest way to join a small group is to check "***Interested in Small Groups***" on the **Communication Tab** in the Worship Guide on Sunday morning. You will be contacted to make an appointment with the Small Groups Pastor who will help you get plugged in right away. Additionally, you can click on "**Small Groups / How Do I Join a Small Group**" on our website. If you have additional questions, please call the church office.

How do I volunteer to serve at Eastside?

Volunteers are the engine behind our growth at Eastside. If you are interested in volunteering, please stop by **The Welcome Center** near the main entrance, or click on "**Volunteers**" on the website for step-by-step instructions.

How do I become a member?

Please contact any staff member above if you are interested in our membership process. All members of Eastside Community Church must participate in our ***Ignite!*** membership training offered at least once every quarter.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Pastor Virgil's blog.

See www.eastside-cc.com for details.

A Simple, Generous Choice...

Electronic Giving

Electronic Funds Transfer

(Direct debit from your checking or savings account)

***Now available at
Eastside Community Church.***

Participate Today.

Electronic giving is a convenient way to provide consistent financial support to your church. Visit our website at www.eastside-cc.com to set up your profile. Contact the church office at (859)624-9646 if you any questions about the process.