

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

EXPOSED

PT. I

May 6, 2012



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit <http://www.sdrock.com/events/>.
2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting <http://www.sdrock.com/live/>.
3. Join other Rock Church small groups in serving San Diego by volunteering for the San Diego Food Bank in the month of May. Go to www.sdrock.com/fooddrive for available volunteer times. You can also RSVP at druiz@sandiegofoodbank.org. Look forward to seeing you there!

MEMORY VERSE

“If anyone gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” (Proverbs. 18:13 ESV)

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24 ESV)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Use one or more of the following opening discussion starters)

1. How has gossip affected you personally? What were the immediate and long-term effects from the gossip? What was your response?
2. Why do you suppose we approach the gossip of celebrities differently? Do think this should be an exception or should be treat all people the same regardless of their public status?



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – EXPOSED

Sermon Review and Introduction

Pastor Miles started the new entitled “Exposed” which aims to expose and break the sin of gossip and judgmentalism in our culture today; specifically the church. This week we looked at the story of The Prodigal Son from Luke 15 from the perspective of the son that stayed behind to serve his father. Most of the time when we read this parable we immediately put ourselves in the place of the son that ran away with his portion of the inheritance but then only to return. Though this could be a way to look at it, it appears that Luke had a bigger picture in mind. Pastor Miles did just that by putting a scope on the heart of the other son. He said some very interesting things. Before we get into direct application let’s do a few things:

1. If necessary briefly review the lesson plan from Sunday and any extra notes you may have taken with the group.

PhD in me-ology

Brotherly love dysfunction

Genie – God relationship

Add'l Notes:

2. Examine the context of Luke together as a group. A few key things to consider before approaching the parable:
 - Written by Luke traditionally around the late fifties or early sixties AD. Luke also wrote the book of Acts around 62-63 while Paul was in prison in Rome.
 - Luke’s (a Gentile) target audience was primarily the Gentiles. A few clues to this are his explanation of Jewish customs, the gospel is for all people (2:10), the genealogy goes back to Adam (all humans, cf. 3:38), Luke extends the boundaries of those welcomed to the Messianic banquet (cf. 13:29), and most important to the Gentiles (and us today) the Great Commission asserts that forgiveness must be preached to all nations (cf. 24:47, Acts 1:8).
 - Luke uniquely mentions the mission of the Seventy (cf. 10:1–24). For the rabbis, 70 was the number denoting the languages of the world (cf. Gen 10). By Jesus sending out 70 preachers of the good news would communicate that the gospel is for all people.¹

Robert James Dr. Utley, vol. Volume 3A, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2004).



A key thread to point out in the background of Luke is that this is a follower of Christ pleading with fellow Gentiles to be followers of Christ themselves. The unique themes we see are that the gospel of Christ and the power that lies within it is available to all people. This is awesome news, and yet we often forget it. If you have time read Luke in one sitting and see the language he uses to expose this great news to the Gentile world. One undeniable theme is that Jesus becomes the focal point of all of life. He is creator, sustainer, redeemer, and so much more. If possible, take some time to expose these realities to your group.

3. Examine the context of this parable together as a group. A few things to consider before approaching the application.
 - 15:1 mentions that the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near him. The tax collectors were viewed as traitors in their culture. They would take the money (usually in extreme excess) from the Jews and give it to Caesar. Nobody liked them, probably more than we appreciate the I.R.S. sometimes. When we see the word “sinner” in the New Testament this is typically referencing someone who has know love or pursued of God. Repentance and faith are not a part of their lives at all. In our language we would simply say they are not saved.
 - The Pharisees were “grumbling” because a rabbi was now mingling with sinners. According to their custom this is unacceptable. Now we can see there are two characters involved in the following three parables:
 - Characters
 - The Pharisees and Scribes
 - The Tax Collectors and Sinners
 - 3 Parables Addresses
 - Parable of the Lost Sheep (15:3-7)
 - Parable of the Lost Coin (15:8-10)
 - Parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32)
 - It is important to remember that although we can see ourselves in a parable or story, we need to make sure we get the facts correct about what the original readers would’ve read. The story is focusing specifically on Israel, not Gentiles. Gentiles were never originally part of the “inheritance” of God (15:12). So we can’t assume that is who the author is addressing. Rather it is Israelites that have rejected the grace and protection of their God and Savior.
 - The coming of Jesus will free the Israelites forever for their sin. Not only that, but the Gentiles reading this will see the coming promise that will soon be available to them too; the gospel!

With the two different characters established and three different parables by Jesus to explain a vital truth, we have a lot of to piece together here. But once we put it together it becomes a wonderful reality.

4. Which of the two characters represents the younger son (the prodigal), and which character represents the older son?
Answers: The younger son represents the tax collectors sinners and the older son represents the Pharisees and scribes.



5. Discuss some core attributes of each of these sons. You may need to re-read the parable a few times to gather all the necessary information.

Answers: List your own observations. They will vary from person to person. A few options will include the following:

- The Older Son (Pharisees and Scribes)
 - Unforgiving (15:29)
 - Judgmental (15:30)
 - Rejection of the grace of the father for all people (15:29)
 - Neglecting existing inheritance (15:31)
 - Lack of justice (15:28-31)
- The Younger Son (Tax Collectors and Sinners)
 - Rejecting of the grace of God for himself (15:12)
 - Living selfishly and recklessly (15:13)
 - Repentance (15:20)
 - Submission (15:21)
 - Rejoice in the grace and forgiveness of the father (15:24)

6. How do you see similarities between the attributes of the two sons compared to the description of the two characters the parables are about?

Answer: Discussion based on your findings in question #5.

Application

Now let's tie the background of the text together with the concept of exposing our gossip and often hypocritical hearts.

1. Pastor Miles attributed us as the "older son" as described in 15:25-32. If these are the hypocritical religious leaders that are described, what judgments have you made to those that may have potentially strayed from the promise and hope of the gospel? Did you feel justified, why or why not?
2. Pastor Miles mentioned what could possibly appear as the "older son" making a lot of false assumptions about his brother. These potential assumptions could show that the younger son was not welcomed back in the family again. Do you currently view people in the church the same way? (Details are to your discretion but give examples if possible).
3. Read 1 John 3:11-15 together as a group. How important is unity in the church to John? What are the consequences to disunity amongst the family of God?
 - Note: Both Luke 15 and 1 John 3 deal specifically with the family of God, but these principles apply directly to those outside of the church too. Consider 1 Pet. 2:12, 16-17. Discuss the positive implications of respecting and speaking well of those that aren't followers of Jesus.
4. Discuss why you suppose the false judgment of those we don't know can have lasting effects.
 - Note there are judgments that are necessary for edification and growth in the body (cf. Matt. 18:15-20). Make sure we focus on the judgments that actually in turn cause us to sin.



Homework

1. Who do you need to confess sin and apologize to? Who did you wrong or falsely accuse of something that was either untrue or none of your business? Approach that person in humility and apologize for your sin.
2. Are you currently involved in the latest gossip magazines and television shows? Discipline yourself to stay out of their lives. Have someone hold you accountable.

