

yours.” (Lk 15:31) He had me with; ‘My son’.

In Jesus our Heavenly Father has reached out and embraced this prickly, hurting, angry, fearful, resentful humanity enfolding us all in his loving embrace. He doesn’t give us what we deserve, what we’re worth. Thank God. In Jesus the Father stays true to himself and absorbs the hurt and pain giving back that amazing love we all need.

A love which allows us to love our enemies, as Jesus taught. A love that frees us to live true to who we are no matter the circumstance

we find ourselves in. We can find ourselves in some very hurtful places, some very unfair places, some places of despair, but in all those places we are the Father’s child, marked by his love, delight of his life. We have room in the Father’s heart.

In the parable of the ‘Prodigal Son’ we’re not told what the older son did. Did he have a change of heart and join the celebration or did he continue to complain and remain outside.

That’s Jesus asking me a question; ‘Tim are you living from my love of you or from the hurt other’s are doing?’ ‘Tim, I love you.’

What’s my response going to be?

Let us pray.
Jesus thank you for coming and giving your life that we might rejoice and celebrate life with the Father as his precious children. Help us in those hard times of life, not to be shaped by them, but may we in those times experience the Father’s love in a special way so that we grow closer and closer to him and more and more mature as his children. Father we love you. Amen.

19 August 2012

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

E100



This week for the E100 readings we looked at Jesus’ teaching. I enjoy being refreshed by Jesus’ ‘Sermon on the Mount’. Some of this sermon still challenges me; “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other... Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you... But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matt. 5:39, 42, 44)

Of course this would be totally impossible if it wasn’t for the fact that Jesus had come and done this to us in the first place. Jesus’ ‘Sermon on the Mount’ always convicts me of my inability and reminds me that in Jesus nothing is

impossible. So I can be happy, but not by using my own strength.

So Jesus teaches; ‘Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ I can’t be happy when I’m full of myself, of my own wants and needs, of my own fears. Thank God that when I give up playing god I find Jesus ready to fill me with the Father’s love and a happiness I could never ever create myself.

In Luke 10 we heard the story of the ‘Good Samaritan’. A man in the pursuit of happiness had the right answer, but still wasn’t happy. He knew the answer to eternal life; “Love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and,

‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Lk 10:27)

He knew the answer but it was still very much theory. He didn’t know the love of the Father, it was still all about himself. What did HE have to do? It revolved around him, and one definition of sin is that life centres on me. In the story of the ‘Good Samaritan’ Jesus takes the view off himself and onto the other person. This can only happen when we are secure. When we have a security greater than ourselves. Otherwise we’ll always be focused on maintaining our identity.

Thank God that in Jesus our identity and security is a gift. It is secure in Jesus, the one who has given his life for us, so that the Father’s love moves

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
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Jesus’ disciples multiplying disciples

from a theory to the reality we live in. We live in the Father's love, so now I don't see an enemy or an opportunity to prove myself. I am now free to live true to who I am in the Father, and act as the Father would. So the Samaritan reaches out and cares for the person in need.

This leads to the last parable we looked at in Luke 15. The parable of the 'Prodigal Son', which really is about a Father who loves his two sons. Both sons go off the rails.

The first son rejects his father in favour of a fist full of money. Do you want the father or the money? He took the money.

How would that have made you feel, rejected for a handful of money?

Rejection hurts. It may have left me somewhat bitter, maybe even

resentful. Definitely with a broken heart. My son has rejected me, left me for dead, seeking the 'good life'. Apparently the 'good life' didn't include his father.

In Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' he talked about how to find the 'good life'. It started

How does rejection make you feel?

with self-denial, but the younger son is going after self-fulfilment. He's going to party and live the 'good life'.

How does rejection make you feel?

Of course this story reflects what we call sin. It's not so much bad verses good, but rather, there just isn't any room for the Father in my pursuit of the 'good life'.

As an aside, the word 'room' reminds me of what Jesus says; 'In my Father's house are many rooms.' 'We will come and make our home with you.' God the Father, through his Son, Jesus, certainly has room for us in his 'good life'. In fact without us there, there is something missing.

Our Father has room in his heart for all his children.

Of course in the parable of the 'Prodigal Son' it is

the love of the Father that brings the younger son home. The son remembers his Father, not as an ogre to be feared. He doesn't say in his mind, 'All dad will do it tell me, you made your bed now sleep in it.' The younger son moves from his despair because there is a small ember of trust. He believes his Father will be gracious enough to allow him to be a servant.

Actually there could have been a real sense of fear because for many what the younger son had done was deserving death. A rebellious son is to suffer capital punishment. That might get you to think twice about coming home. Maybe there was more than an ember of trust.

The younger son must have been confident in his Father's character.

And then the Father fans this ember of hope into a bushfire of love. The Father runs out to meet his son. He's always been his son. He's always had a room in his Father's heart. And the son melts.

There is a change in his rehearsed speech, which now comes from a heart flooded with the Father's love. Instead of manipulating the Father to meet his own needs he simply says; "Father, I have sinned against heaven and

against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." (Lk 15:21) Ain't that the truth.

Likewise I'm not worthy to be called the Heavenly Father's son, but I am. What a wonderful, extravagant gift of love the Heavenly Father has

The Heavenly Father has room for you in his heart.

embraced me in. He has gifted me with adoption as his child, marked by his love, delight of his life. He has gifted me room in his heart, for that is where he wants to share his life with me and all his children.

There's room for everyone.

Sadly the older son is a different story. An unsettling story for me, for he has been living with the Father all this time, but without any joy. He's been slaving

for his Father. His Father has been unfair, 'everyone else is having fun but not me, even this good for nothing, lazy son gets a party. What about me.' The older son has been living with the Father, but it appears he has kept himself from living in the Father's love.

Again the Father shows his amazing love for his children. The older son used a messenger, the

Father comes in person. Not to give the son a piece of his mind, but to bless him with his loving presence. The Father has room in his heart for the older son to live and grow and celebrate life with him.

The Father comes to his older son, and doesn't try and defend himself. He doesn't give the older son a piece of his mind. What does he say; "My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is