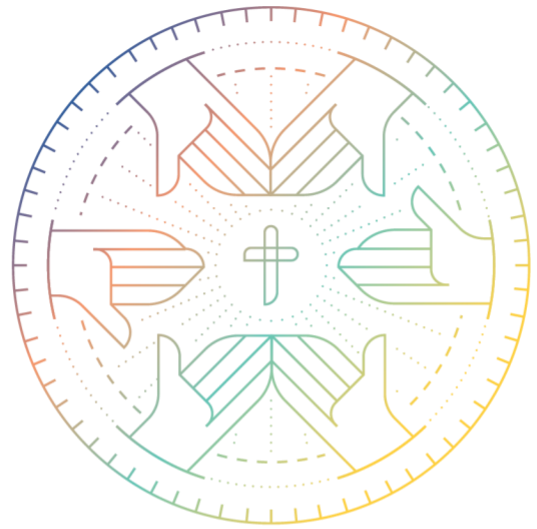


# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



## ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

If you suddenly came into a large inheritance (say, \$1M) and had to spend half and save half, what do you imagine you would spend the half on?

OR

What element from the story of the Prodigal Son do you find most fascinating? Why?

## INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

**Read Luke 15:11-31.**

What most stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Which son do you most relate to? Do you relate to the reckless son who found that life away from his father was empty? Or, do you relate to the religious son who lived in his father's house but did not know his father's heart?

## INTO THE WORD (15 MINUTES)

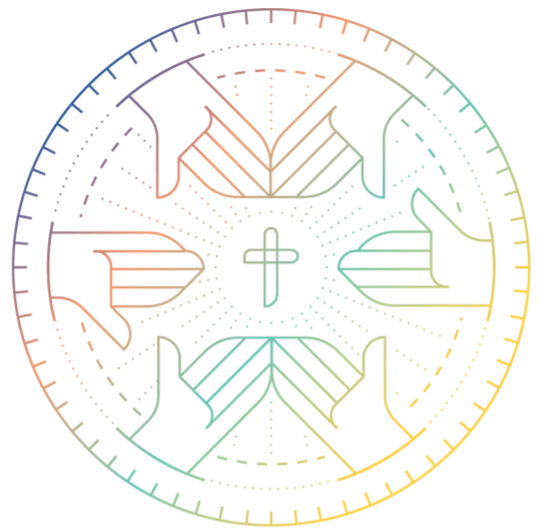
**Read Luke 15:2-10.** Jesus told two other parables in this chapter to illustrate the nature of our heavenly Father. Discuss what these two other parables contribute in our understanding of the Father's heart.

**HOST Guidance:** God came to seek and save the lost. He is always working to draw people to himself. Repentance and contrition open the floodgates of heaven with celebration, welcome, and joyful reunion. God is unwilling to lose even one lost person who belongs to Him. The good that we do, like repentance, become the headlines of heaven!

**Read Psalm 103:8-12; Isaiah 1:18; Romans 5:8; 1 John 1:9.** How do these verses complement the overarching themes of forgiveness, repentance, and God's unconditional love found in the parable?

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**HOST Guidance:** These passages highlight the depth of God's forgiveness and His willingness to remove our sins when we turn to Him in repentance. They emphasize God's invitation for repentance and the transformative power of His forgiveness, which can cleanse us from our sins and make us new. We see the unconditional love of God, showing that even when we are in a state of sin, God's love remains constant and His grace is extended to us through Jesus Christ. We are assured that when we confess our sins to God and seek His forgiveness, He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## APPLICATION (20 MINUTES)

**Host Guidance:** Below are several separate application questions for your group to consider and discuss. Choose as many questions as you have time to discuss and as you consider which questions might have the greatest impact on the group.

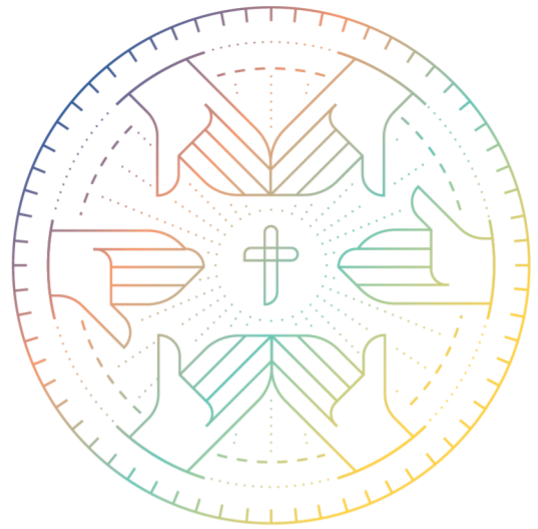
- In the story of the prodigal son, both the reckless son and the religious son missed the heart of the Father in different ways. Can you share a time when you misunderstood His heart? How did you come to understand His heart: His grace, compassion, and forgiveness?
- David said that life away from God doesn't change God's view of us, but rather, it changes our view of God. How does sin change our view of God?
- What does this story say to the person who has drifted away from God, perhaps even into deep sin? What advice would you give to a person in that situation?
- How does the prodigal son story speak to last week's sermon point that God is overjoyed with you?
- Take a few moments to examine your heart for any signs of entitlement, self-righteousness or a lack of compassion toward others.
  1. Why is it so easy to make the same mistakes as the religious son?
  2. How can this parable inspire you to extend forgiveness to others and celebrate the redemption you have found through Jesus Christ?

## PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

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*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing yourself to us so beautifully in this parable of the prodigal son. Through it we see and understand your heart overflowing with love for us and your desire to forgive us and reconcile us when we fail. Protect us from falling into sin or wandering away from you, ending up empty and alone. Protect us from feeling entitled to something we can never earn: your love and favor. Thank you that you invite us to your party in heaven because you love us and want us there. We humbly and joyfully accept your invitation in Jesus' name. Amen.*