

“A New Identity”

Black Sheep week #3

INTRODUCTION

There will always be voices competing to tell us who we are. Some will have a greater impact than others and ultimately the trajectory of our lives will depend on the voice we respond to. The prodigal son also had voices telling him who he was. Even after coming to his senses, he wasn't hearing the truth about himself. In this our final study in the Black Sheep sermon series, we will try to hear what the Father's voice is saying about us.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Do you find it difficult to carry on a conversation in a crowded restaurant?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

What I see ...What God sees

Q1. Read Luke 15:19,24; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Genesis 1:27; 1 Corinthians 15:57

Many times, the most critical voice we will ever deal with is our own. The enemy of your soul not only uses the voices of others to tell you lies, he takes advantage of your own guilt and shame to reinforce a negative view that you might have of yourself. When the Prodigal son was at his lowest, how did he view himself? (Luke 15:19) But how did the father view him? (Luke 15:24)

It can be hard for us to see beyond our own guilt, shame or failures, but God has a different perspective. One way to gauge something's value is by what price it will bring. We might see ourselves as worthless, but what price was paid for you? (1 Peter 1:18-19) If you look in the mirror what image do you see looking back at you? Whose image is it that each one of us bears according to God? (Genesis 1:27) Even when we feel we are losing our daily battles, what is the truth according to 1 Corinthians 15:57? Is there something negative that you think about yourself that is holding you back from seeing yourself as God sees you?

Restoration

Q2. Read Luke 15:22-24; Genesis 3:21; 1 Peter 5:10: Romans 8:38-39

Even though the son asked to be treated as a servant, the Father had a different plan. The first thing he called for was the finest robe, the kind worn by kings, priests and people of high position. When did God first provide a robe to a son who needed to be restored? (Genesis 3:21) The next thing the father gave the prodigal was a ring, which would have signified the family he belonged to, and then shoes because slaves went barefoot, not sons. It gave

the father great joy to restore his son. How do we know God is willing to restore us when we fall? (1 Peter 5:10) The father's love for the prodigal would not be deterred. What are the things that you have found tend to keep you distant from God? Is there anything that we might do that would separate us from God's love? (Romans 8:38-39) The truth is, we have a gracious, forgiving, loving Heavenly Father who longs to restore us to our rightful place as His children. If there is anything hindering you, take time right now to come to your Father and receive His forgiveness and love.

Celebration

Q3. Read Luke 15:28-30, 32

The father was eager to celebrate the return of the prodigal, even if the older son wasn't. What was the reason he refused to go the party? Not only did he fail to see his brother through the father's eye, upon what was he basing his own worthiness? What lies has the older son been allowing to influence him? What did the father view as cause for celebration? Over the weekend we were able to celebrate as members of the New Life Family were baptized declaring that they were dead to sin and alive in Jesu. Share with your group your personal baptism experience and celebrate it once again.

WRAP-UP

We can choose to listen to a number of different voices in our lives, but not all of them tell us the truth. God's truth about us is found in His Word. It tells us that we are His children, made in His image, loved, forgiven and victorious in Christ. If you are listening to other voices that tell you anything different, you are being lied to. God longs to restore us and celebrate that we are his children! Don't let anything keep you from drawing close to the Father's love.

Memory Verse

It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

Luke 15:32 ESV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Take time this week to write down they ways how you think your Heavenly Father sees you (holy, a child of God, forgiven...). See if you can find scriptures to confirm each statement. Then read aloud the truth of who you are in God's eyes.

Q1

Luke 15:19 ESV - 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."

Luke 15:24 NLT - 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

1 Peter 1:18-19 NLT - 18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

Genesis 1:27 ESV - 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT - 57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q2

Luke 15:22-24 NLT - 22 "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

Genesis 3:21 ESV - 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

1 Peter 5:10 ESV - 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Romans 8:38-39 ESV - 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Q3

Read Luke 15:28-30 in your Bible

Luke 15:32 ESV - 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

