

MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

JAN 24, 2021 // BREATHING UNDERWATER



THE LIFELINE

Senior Pastor Marty Grubbs continued in the *Breathing Underwater* series with the call for a decision. The most important decision you can make in your life comes when you answer this question, "Are you ready to change and accept the help of God for the power to do it?" Using the favorite and familiar story in the gospel of Luke, often referred to as "The Prodigal Son," in which a son asked for his inheritance, then walked away from his father and family to pursue a lifestyle marked by one bad decision after another, until he hit bottom and couldn't dig himself out. Marty dispelled the myth of an angry God waiting to punish anyone who has rebelled, chosen their own way over his—anyone who has been searching for something to satisfy, but instead finding only temporary fixes for an insatiable appetite. For the person who is at the bottom or somewhere on the way down, who wants to be well but can't get there on his or her own, there is a loving Father patiently watching and waiting to welcome you home. God is ready, willing, and able, to forgive, to restore, to redeem, to be your constant help in time of need.

In this story there is another person of interest—the older, rule-following brother, who never left his father's side and did everything "right." When the younger brother was welcomed home with open arms, the older brother was angry. He believed his younger sibling deserved to be punished, even rejected. He judged him as not righteous enough to be welcomed back into the family. His pride and self-righteousness got in the way of recognizing, and remembering, his own need for this same love, forgiveness, and mercy. He could have been part of the welcome-home party. Better still, he could have been watching and waiting for his brother's return—to throw his arms around him and say, "We've been waiting for you. Just wait until you see what Father has waiting for you."

SCRIPTURE

¹¹To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. ¹²The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

¹³A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. ¹⁴About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

¹⁷When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.'"

²⁰So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

²²But 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. ²³And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

²⁵Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, ²⁶and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ²⁷'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.'

²⁸The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, ²⁹but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. ³⁰Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!'

³¹His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. ³²We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'" – Luke 15:11-32 NLT

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. – John 3:16-17 NLT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from Marty's message?
2. Read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. What do you learn about the younger son?
3. Describe the father as he is portrayed throughout the story. What is unexpected?
4. Read verses 25-32 again, how would you describe the older son?
5. How have you identified with the younger son in your life (by lifestyle or attitude toward the father)? How have you identified with the older brother (by lifestyle or attitude toward the younger brother)?
6. Read John 3:16-17. How does this summarize the prodigal son story?
7. Have you made the decision to let the Father God into your life? If so, how has this decision changed you? If not, you can ask him right now in prayer.
8. How can we pray for you?

PRAYER

Pray to your loving and compassionate Father, thank him for his mercy and his ever present help in time of need. Thank him for his welcoming you home first once, and then again and again. Ask him to show you places where you have taken on self-righteous attitudes toward those seeking him, to forgive you, and to give you opportunities to welcome others with open arms, to pass on the merciful greeting you were welcomed home with at the beginning of your life of faith.

****If you are making this decision to ask God into your life for the first time, or are returning to him, simply pray to God, expose what has kept you away (small steps first), ask him to forgive you for running from him and trying to go it alone. Then simply fall into his waiting arms, know his mercy, experience his love for you, and receive his power to help you in the next step of faith.**