

CAN OF WORMS

“Does God Love Me?”

Part 1 (7-10 minutes)

In this series we will be tackling hard questions about God and answering them in small group. Disclaimer, In our faith there will be times of doubt, there will be time when we question God character. But it's important to know that there is a God who is near.

This week we will be looking at the question. “Does God Love me?”

Illustration

Tell a story of something well known becoming personal.

- Story of my Coach making every other person run except me when I made a mistake.
 - It became personal.

It is well known that “Jesus loves you.” And it's such a common statement that it can become impersonal. I think we know that God loves people, but it's much harder to believe that God actually loves us personally.

The good news is the Bible talks about this....

Luke 15:11-24

“A man had two sons. The 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. A 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. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into the fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When 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! I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’ So 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. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’” 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. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 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.

Explain story

So Jesus tells this story of a father with two sons. And one of them says he wants his inheritance now, and goes and blows all the money. And the son ends up with no money and seemingly no purpose. That's when he decides to go back home to his father. With the understanding that he no longer deserved to be loved by his father. But he is met by his father in an unexpected way, instead of condemning him for everything he had done wrong, he embraced him back.

Here's the tension we're facing.

TENSION: DOES GOD LOVE ME?

This is significant because if God does love us then, then I can know he wants what's best for us, that He cares for us, our past, present, and future, that He cares for our current struggles and circumstances.

But if He doesn't genuinely love us, then we can't know if He wants what is best for us, we can't be sure that He cares for our current struggles and circumstances.

Group Time (7-10 minutes)

1. Do you think God Loves people?
2. Have you ever felt like it was hard to believe God loves you personally?
3. If God does love you, how does that affect you?
4. Can you tell a story where you experienced God's love?

Part 2 (7-10 minutes)

Here's the thing, it

Main Point: Love is who God is, not what he does.

I John 4:16

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

We have to understand that God loves us, and Love is who he is Love.

God's love is

1. Personal

Observation

I love this story because Jesus explains God's love in the way a father loves his child. It's a personal love. One that isn't affected by circumstance. The father in this story could have, and culturally should have rejected his son, but we see him do just the opposite. (Doesn't mean he approved of his behavior by the way). He loved him personally.

Application

You have to know that God loves you personally. So what does this mean for us ? Here's the key to this, we have to draw near to him to see this.

Key: Draw Near

So how can we draw near? Reading his word, pursuing him in prayer , in worship.

2. Unconditional

Observation

One thing I love about this story is the son did not deserve to receive the fathers love back, but the father still gave it to him. That's an important aspect about God's love, that it is unconditional. In other words, it's not something we earn or deserve but something we receive

Application

We live in a culture that says you have to earn love. If your not good enough your not able to be loved. But that's not the way God works. Love is a part of who he is and when He shows us His love , its unconditional, meaning it's not something we earn. But it is something we receive.

Illustration

Have a gift wrapped for someone Call on someone to give it to .But before you give it to them, tell them it will cost them 10 dollars or something like that. Is it a gift now?No

You have to know that His Love is a gift, it's not something we earn, it's something we receive.

Key: Receive it.

It's so easy to have the temptation to be so independent , but the truth is we need God's unconditional love. Because none of us our perfect we need a love that is found in Jesus that is perfect.

This is something we need to do every day, through every circumstance we face , receive that love.

Response

Salvation - those who have never received that love

Recommitment - those who have become independent of it.

Prayer - Those who need someone to walk along with them.