

## How to Love Your Neighbor

### Part 2: Chase Them

Luke 15

#### Summary:

God is passionately pursuing us with love, and invites us to join in sharing His joy and invitation with our neighbors.

#### Main Ideas:

God wants everyone to enjoy him.

Our lives would be completely different if everyone was truly enjoying God.

When we experience God pursuing us we see how he is pursuing our neighbors.

People who were nothing like Jesus liked being around Jesus because he liked and accepted them.

Jesus doesn't take kindly to people judging people he loves.

Nothing makes God happier than when his people are found.

God doesn't judge people for being lost; he purposely pursues them and is ecstatic when they come home.

Everyone is someone God is purposely pursuing.

God has purposely put people in our path because he is purposely pursuing them.

#### Invitation:

This week, write down and repeat to yourself...

- God loves me and is pursuing me.
- God loves \_\_\_\_\_ and is pursuing \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to you that God knows, loves, and enjoys you?
2. What ways do you think life would change if EVERYONE was truly enjoying God?
3. Reread the story of the loving father in Luke 15:11-32. What stands out?
4. In what ways can we join God in His pursuit of others without making it feel forced or obligatory?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**WE:** God Knows/Loves/Enjoys you.

And he wants you to enjoy him too and enjoy the amazing life he offers!

**God wants everyone to enjoy him... 1 Timothy 2:3-6**

Chosen his followers to tell the world the most amazing message in the universe...

- There is a God who knows you, loves you, enjoys you.
- You have infinite worth b/c you are made in his image and you are his child.
- You can enjoy what life was meant to be by knowing and enjoying him

Who wouldn't want that?

Imagine: Our lives would be completely different if everyone was truly enjoying God.

So why do so many of our neighbors seem uninterested in experiencing this life?

- Not b/c bad people/hate God/too busy worshipping the devil/want to live life of selfish overindulgence
- Not church person, you already know the answer,

More often than not, what keeps people from enjoying/knowing God is... us. The Church

- For years and years Xians' attitudes and apathy have kept people from D/E/S the life Jesus offers.
- I know many of you have experienced this in your past

**Attitudes**... It's us (the insiders) and them (the outsiders).

Call THEM names like... Non-Xians / Sinners / Unbelievers / Pagans / Unsaved / Heathen

- All negative... what does that tell you? What does that tell them?

Too often the Church is known for what it's against rather than what it is for... against anyone who doesn't look, act, vote, love, believe just like we do.

And often it's not even hostility, it's just we don't really care that much...

- "Jesus is something I like but I'm sure they have their own thing"
- We're busy with our own stuff and don't even think about it.

Most of our neighbors don't know they can enjoy God b/c we haven't told them.

It's time for a change... that's why Crosscreek exists... To invite neighbors D/E/S... together

- Many of you are here b/c you want to be part of that change.

How? By making ourselves feel guilty until we start talking to people about Jesus? By forcing ourselves to care?

No... So much better, more fun, exciting than that... We get join God in his great pursuit of those he loves.

See God is pursuing all of us with his love... so that we can enjoy him more and more everyday

When we experience God pursuing us we see how he is pursuing our neighbors.

Ancient historian and a biographer of Jesus, Luke, gives us a scene from Jesus' life that shows this idea perfectly...

**GOD:** Luke 15

**V. 1** OFTEN came to listen

- Notorious sinners
- People who were nothing like Jesus liked being around Jesus b/c he liked and accepted them.

But there were some people who didn't like Jesus...

## V. 2 Why complaining?

Thought they were the ones God liked... Deserved God's attention.

If God was really going to send his Messiah then they would be the ones he would hang out with.

They claimed to be the ones who got to say who was in and out of the holy club

- and Jesus was accepting and letting in all the people they said couldn't be allowed in

Now, how would you feel if someone were vocally looking down on and judging your friends?

- What if they were your kids?
- Jesus doesn't take kindly to people judging people he loves.

Jesus is going to answer these guys and I don't think he does it like the meek/mild Jesus we often make him out to be.

- I think he's pissed when he responds

## V. 3-10 What an amazing and powerful picture of God's heart.

- Really a lot here if we just sit with it... a few things...

1st- The shepherd/woman have lost something incredibly important and do everything they can to get it back.

- In both pictures they search until they find it.
- Their whole attention is consumed by finding what they lost.

2nd- And look at the heart... no annoyance, frustration, just getting to work finding what was lost

3rd- At the end of each search is a party!

Celebrate with me! I finally found it!

- Nothing makes God happier than when his people are found

All of heaven celebrates with him!

And now after telling these 2 stories Jesus might have calmed down a bit... and he can tell a longer story

- A story that gives one of the clearest pictures of who God really is...

**Paraphrase:** It's called the Prodigal Son but it's actually about the son's father...

Man/2 Sons

Youngest... Dad you just won't die. Give me my inheritance now.

- Moves to far away country and wastes all his money on "wild living."
- Right when he runs out of money... a famine hits the area
- No one to take care of him... begins to starve
- Convinces a pig farmer to hire him to feed the pigs

- Even the pig food begins to look good... but still no one will take care of him.

No one wanted him, he was a stranger, in a strange land, with nothing to offer anyone.

- The world had no more use for him... written him off, using him for the meager work he can offer.

Finally after living in horrible conditions for who knows how long...

**V. 17-19** All that's left to do is grovel at his father's feet...

Walks home... probably practicing his speech the entire way, wondering if his dad will hire him, will he judge him, going to be embarrassing, awkward, humiliating...

**V. 20** Saw him a long way off...

Had been scanning the horizon day after date looking for his son.

- Is that him? No just some traveling salesman
- Is that him? No just another farmer
- Is that him? Kind of looks like him, skinnier but the same height, same walk, same hair... it's him! He's home!

He is FILLED with love and compassion...

- No anger, no judgment,
- Just love and compassion for what the son has had to go through away from his father.

Now the son is ready to give his speech...

**V. 21** But the father doesn't even let him finish... doesn't even acknowledge his son's attempt at groveling...

**V. 22-24** "So the party began."

No lecture, no conditions set to allow him to stay, no restitution to be paid, no judgment!

- Just love and compassion and joy!
- And an invitation to enjoy the life the father could give you!

The rest of the world might have had no more use for the son.

- It didn't matter

The son had made his own mess all by himself

- It didn't matter

He had rejected his father and dishonored him

- It didn't matter

He had nothing to offer his father, had no way of paying him back

- It didn't matter

All that mattered to the father was that his son was home.

All he had to do was go home. Takes humility/can be scary/uncertain... can be difficult for so many.

BUT... God doesn't judge people for being lost; he purposely pursues them and is ecstatic when they come home.

**YOU:** Listen: You are the lost sheep, the valuable coin, and the beloved child .

And your Heavenly Father is pursuing you, longing to be reunited with you.

- He's inviting you to enjoy the life he offers
- Not waiting to judge you, no lecture is coming.
- When we are willing to come back home he is ready and eager... FILLED/overflowing w/ love and compassion.
- Simpy have to turn to him and accept it.
- And begin a new life as a child of God

Never come home before?

- "I'm home. I want to be your child. I accept your forgiveness and new life"

Maybe you're not there yet... that's completely ok.

- Just know God is not against you, mad at you... he is giving you an open invitation.
- Ask questions, explore, take some steps to get to know who God REALLY is.

Now listen to this too: You are the sheep, the coin, and the child... and so is your neighbor.

Everyone is someone God is purposely pursuing.

And he has chosen his people/church to be the ones to invite them to the party.

Last week we asked: Who is in your path that needs to know God loves/enjoys them?

- Think about that person
- Why has God put them in your life?

B/c... He is pursuing them

- And you are the person he has chosen to show them his love, his enjoyment of them... to show them the way home to invite them to their own homecoming party.

This week, maybe beyond, write down and repeat to yourself...

God loves me and is pursuing me.

God loves \_\_\_\_\_ and is pursuing \_\_\_\_\_.

That's it. Still don't have to really DO anything. That will start next week.

When we start seeing others as someone being pursued by our Heavenly Father, the same way he pursues us,

- We begin to actually love them and enjoy them

**WE:** Imagine... What would happen if we had the same passion for pursuing people that God has?

If we saw our friends and neighbors and families the same way HE saw us...

- A defenseless sheep that needs saving and protection
- A valuable treasure that is diligently being looked for.
- A lost/beloved child of God that desperately needs saving.
- Someone God is longingly waiting to embrace into his family.

What if we all purposely pursued one person this year?

- Not as a project or a notch on our belt... but b/c we love them and want them to know God enjoys them and they can enjoy him now and forever?

Imagine celebrating each week with angels in heaven over someone who's found God's love.

Crosscreek exists to Invite our neighbors to D/E/S the life Jesus offers... together.

- To invite as many people as possible to enjoy being enjoyed by God.

What if we purposely lived this out?

How fun would it be in here if 50% were people who just found out that God loves/enjoys them?

- Every time we get together can be a celebration of abundant, new, eternal life Jesus gives us.

It's what Jesus wants... **Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 2:3-6**

It's what we CAN do, it's who we CAN be... together.

God is ready to throw a homecoming party for your friends and family. And you have the privilege of inviting them to the celebration!

God has purposely put people in our path b/c he is purposely pursuing them.