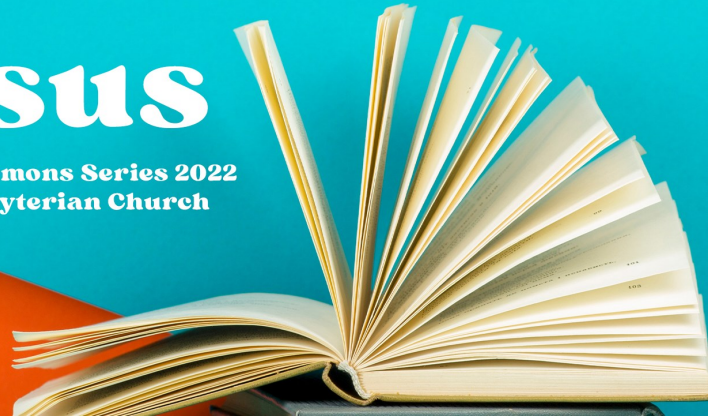


Stories Jesus Told

Spring Sermons Series 2022
First Presbyterian Church



Sermon-based Guide for Reflection and Discussion

Week of June 5

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

Sermon Title: The Prodigal Son

“Neither son loved the father for himself. They both were using the father for their own self-centered ends rather than loving, enjoying, and serving him for his own sake. This means that you can rebel against God and be alienated from him either by breaking his rules or by keeping all of them diligently. It's a shocking message: Careful obedience to God's law may serve as a strategy for rebelling against God.”

— Timothy Keller, [The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith](#)

“Jesus does not divide the world into the moral “good guys” and the immoral “bad guys.” He shows us that everyone is dedicated to a project of self-salvation, to using God and others in order to get power and control for themselves. We are just going about it in different ways. Even though both sons are wrong, however, the father cares for them and invites them both back into his love and feast. This means that Jesus’s message, which is “the gospel,” is a completely different spirituality. The gospel of Jesus is not religion or irreligion, morality or immorality, moralism or relativism, conservatism or liberalism. Nor is it something halfway along a spectrum between two poles—it is something else altogether.”

— Timothy Keller, [The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith](#)

Questions:

1. The father in today’s parable ran with open arms and bear-hugged his returning son. That’s what God does when we ask for forgiveness. How does that make you feel?
2. Does anything surprise you about this story?
3. Discuss the 2 quotes above.