

# Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

## Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

## Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

## Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

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We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{over for sermon notes}

February 10, 2008

Pastor Bob Wine

### THE PRODIGAL MINDSET

*There is a cost to self-centeredness and independence*

Luke 15:11-19

#### FOCUS FOR THE DAY... "Bringing Home the Prodigal!"

The story of the prodigal Jesus told about in Luke 15 could be your story in some ways. Each of us has the potential of having been, being or becoming a prodigal. **The truth is -- God loves prodigals.**

#### 1. THE GOOD

- Luke 15:11-13** "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 ...'" NLT
- He actually had some good qualities.
    - He was adventuresome and had initiative to travel and learn from these people.
    - He also realized it was time to move out and establish his own identity.

#### 2. THE BAD

- It is not good talents that define a person. Rather, it's the quality of your decisions that define your future -- in the natural and spiritual.
    - **Bad decisions put a lid on your future.**
- Luke 15:13b-14** "... and there he wasted all his money on wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve."
- I pursue only **pleasure**
  - I refuse to live within healthy limitations "... *his money ran out*"
  - I am not prepared for the **future**
- You won't be able to put off standing before God when He calls your name.**

### 3. THE UGLY

**Luke 15:16** “The boy became so hungry that even the pigs he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. **But no one gave him anything.**”

• Reality is -- this happens because we don't pay attention to those little warning signs that come on the front end.

**You know its ugly when:**

- You're all **alone**. **Luke 15:16b** “... even the pigs he was feeding the pigs looked good to him.”
- Your mind gets twisted.

• It's really ugly when all of a sudden their minds start to twist, and they start craving things that are not right to crave.

**The hope and good news is that God has such a better idea.**

**That's not the life God designed for anyone.**

**Can you identify with this young man?**

- God sees you through His filter and sees what you can become -- the potential of your life.
- Little did the prodigal know that the father was going to open up his arms of love to him.

## HOW CAN I BEST PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE?

**Ask yourself this question: “Where am I in this journey?”**

1. Are you ready to leave home for a better life? Are you experiencing the euphoric before starting down? Are you at the bottom seeing the mess you've made of your life, but too ashamed to seek God's help?
2. If you know you're at the bottom, please take time to seek God with your whole heart. Seek out a godly person who will pray with you for God's perspective, and not just enable you.
3. You must realize that there is a cost to self-centeredness and independence.
4. Begin looking for those warning signs that God may be giving you to keep you from experiencing the ugly.
5. Remember **God loves prodigals**, and **He loves you**.

## “DIGGING DEEPER”

For personal or small group study

Week of February 10, 2008

**QUICK REVIEW:** Which point or scripture passage most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week's message? Why?

**Start by reading the story found in Luke 15:1-3, 11-31**

**TODAY'S FOCUS ...**

1. What do you believe are the most prominent reasons why people become distracted, discouraged, deceived, disillusioned or disgruntled with God? [Romans 1:21-25; 2:4-5, 8]

2. Straying sheep is a metaphor used throughout the Bible. [Isaiah 9:16; Ezekiel 34:4-5; Hebrews 5:2; 1 Peter 2:25] Why do you suppose God chose sheep to describe us? Do you think this a flattering description?

**GETTING THE POINT ...**

1. Pastor and author Lloyd John Ogilvie says this, “*We all want to be one thing we can never be: god over our own lives.*” Do you feel this could have been the heart of the prodigal wanting to leave home? Explain. How do you relate to the prodigal son?
2. In what ways are we, like the prodigal, influenced by a culture of “instant everything?” How does this impact our journey with Christ?
3. If bad decisions put a lid on our future – what do we need to do not to waste the gift of life? [Mark 12:30-31]  
What are we in a frantic search for in our lives? What part do we play in moving people closer to, or further away, from God? [Luke 4:43; 5:8-11; Acts 10:42-45; 3 John 1:9]

**A LOOK INSIDE ...**

1. We know when someone breaks our heart, but do you believe the prodigal knew that he broke his father's heart? Do you realize that you have broken God the Father's heart? How does that make you feel?
2. How can you be better equipped to understand, love, and respond to those who have no interest in God? [Matthew 10:16; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-5]