

Connect Notes - 6 September 2015

FATHER'S DAY - PS PHIL PRINGLE

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.” Luke 15:22-32 NKJV from (The Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32)

On Fathers' Day we read again the story of the Prodigal Son, a story which Jesus told to clearly show the Father's heart to the people. The people of Jesus' day had been living a long time under the law of Moses and were angered by Jesus' teachings about a God of grace and freedom.

2 Corinthians 5:19 tells us that we are part of God's ministry of reconciliation; He is in us, trying to reconcile the world to Himself. Too often people try to reconcile people to God but alienate them instead by pointing out their sins. But God does go looking for our sins, He has the grace deals with our sins.

Proverbs 17:9 contrasts those who draw attention to the failures and mistakes of others (those who repeat a matter cause separation) with those who cover over a transgression (seek love and relationship).

Jesus is urging us not to be like the older brother. The older brother didn't recognise the sound of joy. He had lived in the Father's house, given a double portion and he had never done anything other than work. When people try to stand in their own righteousness, they get angry when

“sinners” are welcomed and blessed straight away.

Jesus is also urging us to be like the father who waited patiently in faith for his son to come home. This faithful father waited, knowing that God can bring anyone back from rock bottom. We know he waited and hoped because there was a fattened calf at the ready and the father was watching, seeing his son “while he was still far off”.

There is no denying that this is a difficult task in our world where broken can seem like the norm but because this is God’s heart for you, He will help you.

Reconciliation requires 2 things: someone to say “I’m sorry” and someone to say “I forgive you”. Usually this is messy and the world says people must apologise before we decide whether or not to forgive them. As the Prodigal Son’s father shows us, it is the other way around. If we forgive people before they apologise, the apology can be sincere without defensiveness and relationship is possible. The Prodigal Son doesn’t get to finish his apology –where he expected judgement, he was showered with affection.

Lastly, Jesus is reminding us with this story that we are the Prodigal Son. From the moment he comes back to the Father’s House he is given:

1. A robe representing Jesus’ righteousness, prepared for us;
2. A ring representing authority and blessing as a son of the house;
3. And sandals. Where once God had told Moses to remove his sandals and stand before God in his own righteousness, Jesus tells us to stand before God in complete confidence because we have Jesus’ perfect righteousness.