



The Red Carpet | Shawn Johnson | 5.5.19
Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If you could bring back any fashion trend what would it be and why?

SHARE

What was the best part of your week and the most difficult part of your week and why?

Our church exists to make heaven more crowded by welcoming home prodigals! But since it is so easy to forget the “why,” we want to constantly remind each other what we are striving for. That is why we launched into this current series called “Welcome Home” to remind us of why we do what we do.

Our hope is that Red Rocks be a place where everyone feels like they are a part of the family. No matter who you are, where you are from, where you’ve been, or what you’ve done, we want you to feel at home. No church does this perfectly, and we know we still have a long way to go, but we are committed to working toward this goal together. This week, we continue in the series by talking about a story Jesus told a very diverse group of people! But before we read the story, let’s get things started by answering this question.

The church is a body of believers, meaning it is a family of imperfect Christ-followers. Have you ever struggled with the idea that you belong in the family?

Luke 15:11-32

What are your initial thoughts about this story?

There are three main characters in this story comprised of the older son, the younger son, and the Father. Which of the three do you resonate with the most? Why?

The story of the prodigal son is the most famous homecoming story in Scripture. But it is less a story about a prodigal son, and more a story of a loving Father. As you just read, a man has two sons, but the younger one asks for his inheritance early. That's another way of saying, "Dad, I wish you were dead so that I could have your money." Interestingly, the Father gives him what he wants, and allows him to leave the house.

The younger son wastes all he was given in a short period of time. Out of options, the younger son returns home to face the consequences, but in one of the most beautiful moments in Scripture, the Father sees him from a long way off, runs to him, embraces him, and welcomes him home with a celebratory party!

There are several layers to this story. But at its most basic level, it is a beautiful story about a Father's unconditional love for his son. The Father looks past all of the son's mistakes, runs out to protect him, forgives him and restores him.

We talk about this story all the time at Red Rocks Church because it gets right to the core of the character and nature of God. We worship a God who is love (1 John 4:8), is quick to forgive (Luke 15:20), wants a relationship with all of his children (1 Timothy 2:4), and went to extraordinary lengths to make a way for that to happen (John 3:16).

This is fantastic news, but sometimes it can be difficult for us to believe, especially when we are in those darker nights of the soul. We have a crafty and cunning enemy, spiritual forces of wickedness that desires for us to believe the lie that we are too far gone, unredeemable, and unworthy of God's love (Ephesians 6:12). But those are all lies of the enemy. Jesus says that although the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, He is here to give us abundant life (John 10:10). Reciting, remembering, and repeating the story of the Prodigal Son is one of the best ways to fight back against the lies that tarnish the true character of our loving God.

What are the some of the common lies that the enemy continually tries to reinforce in your own life?

Have you experienced any similar feelings that the younger son dealt with?

Can anyone of you relate to the older brother's frustrations and anger with how the Father compassionately reacted to his younger brother? If so, why?

M O V E

Romans 8:37-39

What are some examples of things that we might wrongfully believe...will 'separate us from the love of God'?

You see, if we choose to believe what God says about us, that He is who He says He is and does what He says He will do, it will change everything about our mindsets. In fact, by reminding ourselves of God's truth every day, it will be much easier to detect a lie.

Just as Shawn said this week, "God rolls out the red carpet for us." We are His honored guests at the table, despite all we have done wrong and all the times we turned our backs on God. He forgives and restores; this is who God is. His kindness leads us to turn away from the lies and sin and walk back toward home.

What area of your life do you most need to fully embrace God's love?

Here at Red Rocks, we are about everyone. We believe that God's love is transformational. Remember last week, Ronnie reminded, "if you call this place home, if you allow the love of God in your life, it will transform you." He has the power to transform your life to the extent that your own story becomes a powerful change-agent in the world around you. God will turn all the enemy intended for harm in your life, into something good.

Because of the love that God has for us we are then able to be that extension to others around us. As we remember God's deep love and affection for us, this brings a shift in

perspective. We think differently. We do things, see things and love people differently. It's because of God's love within us. He makes it possible to see the world through His eyes. He makes it possible to "roll out the red carpet" for those who may be in your life that are difficult to love.

Do you have people in your life you struggle to roll out the Red Carpet for? If so, why?

What is one practical step you can take this week to be more like the Father in the prodigal son story?

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying for each other. If you are in a co-ed group, it can be helpful to break up into two groups in order to share more easily about your prayer request.

T O G O

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:10