

JOIN US FOR...



CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING
Come to find out about Element's budget, an update on Planting Roots, and what we are planning for twenty fifteen.



SUPER SNACK SUNDAY
Bring seal-able, healthy and easily dispensable snacks for our eKids! classrooms!



CONNECT PARTY
A fun evening filled with desserts, laughter and a chance to meet and get to know others at Element. A great way to get connected & find out what's next!



GOSPEL CLASS

8 week class that goes through basic Doctrine in Christianity & what Element believes specifically. Starts February 1st at 9:30a service



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Thank you for joining us today. This is a short note to let you know that we know what you are thinking. It is hot and cramped in this room. We want to acknowledge with you that yes, the front room is full, the kids rooms are full, and it can get warm. We are working on alleviating this right now by building our own building on the land just north of us (we must be out of this one by December 2016).

There is a lot that goes into the process of Element having a permanent home, but we hope that today you are first drawn to Jesus before you are overwhelmed by anything else. If it gets too hot we may hand out popsicles to help you cool off and give you a sugar rush. If you would like a service that has open seats (and is cooler), you are invited to our 8:15am service. Please understand that all of these "challenges" are because of our love for Jesus, people, and growth that has come quickly. These are good things. We hope you will stay as we work to make more room for you to be part of the good thing Jesus is doing here. If you would like more information about our building process or how you can participate you can visit www.elementroots.org - The Element Team

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PRODIGAL GOD

the father

TODAY'S VERSES:

- Psalms 136: 1-3
- Luke 15: 11-32
- Proverbs 16:26
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10
- Romans 5:8

MY NOTES:

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; ~ Psalm 136:1-3

PRODIGAL GOD

the father

This is our fourth week in the five week series centering on the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. The idea for this series came out of reading Timothy Keller's book The Prodigal God. The word prodigal can mean wasteful, when talking about the younger son, but it can also mean lavishly abundant (or even reckless) when referring to God. That God's, like the father in Luke 15, has lavished His love upon His creation; that God has been reckless in the bestowing of His grace.

When have you received grace from someone when you should have received punishment?

What is the greatest display of God's grace in your life that you have seen?

So far in the Prodigal God series we have looked at the younger son, the one we call "the prodigal." This son took his inheritance and ran from his familial responsibility by squandering his inheritance away. A large part of the parable centers on the younger son waking up to who his father really is. In the Prodigal God it says, "Properly understood, Christianity is by no means the opiate of the people. It's more like the smelling salts."

How has understanding who God is better woken you up?

The older brother, in the parable, was just as far from the father as the younger brother. The older brother viewed his father like a boss who paid a wage that needed to be earned. When the younger brother ran away the older stayed at home and worked out of a sense religious moralism; the moralism allowed him to question his father's love in light of how hard he was working. Tim Keller writes, "Religious people commonly live very moral lives, but their goal is to get leverage over God, to control him, to put him in a position where they think he owes them. Therefore, despite all their ethical fastidiousness and piety, they are actually rebelling against his authority."

Have you ever bargained with God? In what ways?

Have you ever thought your own moralism should have brought you better favor with Jesus?

In today's message we went through the story again, but we tried to do it with an eye on the father. The story of Luke 15 is a story about the father and his character. *Luke 15:11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. Luke 15:20 his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. Luke 15:22 But the father said to his servants, Luke 15:28 His father came out and entreated him, Luke 15:31-32 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad..."*

What type of character do you see the father display in Luke 15?

How does that character correspond to who God is?

When we understand the character of God better, it enables us to be better imitators of God (as dearly loved children - Eph 5:1). We also begin to understand the Gospel better, God's story better, and how we can live in the reality of salvation and redemption in Jesus. The Prodigal God says, "Faith in the gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding, our identity, and our view of the world. Behavioral compliance to rules without heart-change will be superficial and fleeting... We can only change permanently as we take the gospel more deeply into our understanding and into our hearts. We must feed on the gospel, as it were, digesting it and making it part of ourselves. That is how we grow."

What is the Gospel?

How can either a false understanding of the gospel, or an incomplete understanding of the gospel, hamper growth in living in the Gospel?

What are the most common misunderstandings of the Gospel?

The Gospel is meant to be central to our understanding of living life because the Gospel is all about Jesus. In the parable of Luke 15:11-32, Jesus' aim is to help His hearers understand the heart of the Gospel as lived out in a real world context. In the end, both brothers' lives should have been drastically changed because of the father's unwavering love. Tim Keller writes, "People whose lives remained unchanged by God's grace didn't really understand its costliness, and therefore didn't really understand the gospel. They had a general idea of God's universal love, but not a real grasp of the seriousness of sin and the meaning of Christ's work on our behalf."

How should lives be changed by the Gospel "look?"