



IRON MILL CHURCH

The Tale of Two Brothers

Luke 15:11-32

Message Reflection Guide

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

– John 15:1-11, ESV

CONVERSATION STARTER

What are some of your New Year's resolutions (or goals) for 2023? What are some examples of past resolutions that you either kept or broke?

GETTING INTO THE SCRIPTURES **Read Luke 15:11-32**

Pastor Brandon said, "**This year, choose to live life *with* God.**" In the parable, the father represents God. How does your view of God compare to the Prodigal's father? Which brother do you most relate with?

The younger brother lived life from God. Read verses 11-13 again. How does consumerism impact our view of God? How does the younger brother's relationship with the Father impact his own well-being?

The older brother lived life for God. Read verses 25-30 again. How does the older brother's sentiments about the younger brother and the father's response compare to how you would react in a similar situation? Read Philippians 3:8. Why does Paul value experiencing Christ more than knowledge about him?

Neither brother lived life with God. Read verse 31 again. How does the father's response compare to God's response to us? How have you experienced communion with God in the past?

MAKING IT REAL

This new year, don't settle for a relationship with God that uses Him to simply get the things you want. Don't make "doing God's mission" your identity. Instead, rest in your relationship **with** Him! Pray through the scriptures and take time to listen to God speaking to you. You may be surprised!