

## **Parables: Jesus the Storyteller**

### **Lesson 21 - Meeting Jesus**

#### **Warm up -**

1. What would Jesus say to you if you were all alone right now and he stepped into the room? Take a moment to write down the conversation.

2. How do you feel when you know you've blown it big-time and you're sure your parents are going to ground you for a month, but they end up not punishing you?

3. How did Jesus react to the disciples when he met them after the crucifixion and they didn't even recognize him?

#### **Lesson -**

Ask ten people this question: If Jesus were to step out of a car and walk right up to you, what would he say to you? You might be surprised by some of the answers. Many people imagine that Jesus would say something that would make them feel guilty. "He'd say I should try harder." Or, "He'd tell me to pray more."

Those of us who have been raised to live good, moral lives can probably relate. The problem with living *good* lives is that we can always live *better* lives, and this idea creeps into our deepest selves.

Even though we know that our salvation is a free gift - we can't earn it no matter how many good things we do - we can't help but feel that we aren't doing enough. In spite of ourselves, we begin to equate our faith with being a good person. We begin to believe that people who go to church and youth group regularly, who are always helpful and polite, who are never home past their curfew, who always do their homework on Friday instead of saving it till Sunday night set the standards. And the rest of us never quite measure up.

Fortunately for us, the God of the Bible doesn't see it that way. The God of the Bible (shown to us in the person of Jesus) loves us way too much. Our God doesn't stand around with arms crossed tightly, tapping his foot with an angry scowl as we constantly screw up. If anything, God looks hurt and grieved when we mess up - not so much for himself, but for us. And when we come back to our senses, he's ready to throw a party!

#### **Read Luke 15: 11 - 24**

1. As you read this, look for how the younger son wronged his father and how the father reacted to his son.

2. What drove the son back home?

3. What was the son's attitude when he returned to his father?

4. Even though it was highly unusual for the younger son to ask for his share of the inheritance, the father gave the son money and freedom. Do you think he was wise to do so? Is God any different with us?
5. Can you identify with the younger son? At this point in your life, do you think you are more like him at the beginning of the story when he asked for his inheritance, or in the middle when he was in a faraway place living it up, or at the end when he came to his senses and asked for his father's forgiveness?
6. How does this story affect your idea of what God is like? How will it help you approach God?
7. What did you write for the first Warm-up question about meeting Jesus? Discuss it with the group.
8. What's the best way for God to help people come to their senses?
9. What should be our attitude toward those who seem to be too busy living on the edge to pay attention to God?