

Story Sunday

GOD'S STORY CHANGES OURS

GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you grow in your relationship with God and develop meaningful, lasting relationships with others. Get together with friends, or visit brookwoodchurch.org/groups to find a group that's already meeting. *Let's do life together!*

Story Sunday: God's Story Changes Ours

February 2, 2025

Connect

What's an emotion you often feel but rarely express? Why?

Pray

Spend a couple of minutes quieting your heart and drawing your attention toward God.

Consider these prayer points, changing the me/my to us/our if praying in a group.

- Father, the Bible was written so long ago, but I believe You have something important to say to me today. Help me hear Your voice and grow closer to You as I study and reflect on this week's material.
- Help me have a more honest and accurate view of my sin.
- Help me grow in my experience of you as Savior so I can know more fully the forgiveness and freedom you offer.

Read

Luke 18:9-14 (NLT)

Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank You, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give You a tenth of my income.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Explore and Discuss

1. Who is Jesus speaking to? How does knowing that set the stage for the story He tells?
2. Who are the people in the story? Describe them.
3. What did the Pharisee believe about himself and about God?
4. What did the tax collector believe about himself and about God?
5. What point is Jesus trying to make?
6. There's a lot more Pharisee in each of us than we often like to admit. Describe a time when you were critical of others so you could feel better about yourself (whether you realized it at the time or not).
7. Describe a time you were aware of your sin and asked God for forgiveness.
8. What does it feel like to receive God's grace and mercy?
9. How do you relate with people when you feel prideful?
10. In what ways are your relationships different when you live with humility?

Read

Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)

So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.

11. Read this passage again, quietly to yourself. What specific words stand out to you? Share with the group why those particular words are important.

12. How does this passage change, challenge or encourage your view of God?

Make a Move

God caringly weaves the details of our lives to make something beautiful. He turns brokenness into wholeness. He turns sorrow to joy. Tragedy becomes blessing, and despair is overcome by hope. Jesus is the hero of the story.

- How can Jesus become a greater hero in your story this week?
- Pause and ask God what He wants you to know and how He's leading you to respond to this week's study and discussion.

For Further Reflection and Discussion

Read these passages to help you see the connection between salvation and baptism.

- Acts 8:36-38
- Acts 9:18
- Acts 10:34-36

Memorize

One of the best ways to hear God throughout the day is to store His words in your heart and mind.

Based on this week's theme, commit these words of Scripture to memory:

"But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.'"

Luke 18:13 (NLT)