



Sermon Discussion Questions
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Sermon Series: I Believe
Week 2: God the Father Almighty

1. ICE BREAKER: The message talked about being “brand loyal” to things we grew up with. What’s a brand (food, clothing, product, etc.) you are oddly loyal to — and refuse to switch no matter what?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Luke 15:11-24:

¹¹Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²²"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

You're probably familiar with this parable. Is anything standing out new to you today? How do you think the father would have felt? The younger son?

3. This week's message was centered on the first line of the creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." There are a lot of important ideas about God contained in this short phrase.

Talk about why it's important to understand God as Creator. What about as almighty? What emotions surface for you when you think of these ideas — comfort, awe, distance, intimidation, something else?

4. Sometimes, it's easier to keep God "out there" (Creator) or "up there" (Almighty), but harder to relate to Him as Father. Often, that is because our experience of our own earthly fathers has a direct influence on how we think about God.

Why do you think it's easy to keep God "out there" (Creator) or "up there" (Almighty), but harder to relate to Him as Father? In what ways do you think your upbringing has influenced how you relate to God today? (Share as much as you are comfortable).

5. In the parable, the first thing we notice about the father is that he stays. The son leaves, but the father stays in the relationship. This is also true of God. Deuteronomy 31:8 says, "*The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*"

Where in your life do you most need to remember that God does not leave? When you feel far from God, how can you remind yourself that He is near? What faith practices help point you to God?

6. Next, we learn from the parable that the father forgives. The father ran to the son before the son even had a chance to offer his apology. Isaiah 43:25 says, "*I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.*"

Why do you think it's so hard for us to fully receive forgiveness — even when we know it's offered? What does it mean to you that God 'remembers your sins no more'?

7. The father's presence also protects the son from shame and harm. Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

When life feels overwhelming or exposing, what does it look like practically to let God be your refuge? How has God protected you throughout your life?

8. Finally, the father didn't just forgive the son, he restores his identity as son and heir, by gifting him with his robe, ring, and sandals.

Do you ever find yourself relating to God more like a servant trying to earn approval than a son or daughter who already has it? Of the four truths we explored — God stays, forgives, protects, restores — which one do you most need to believe or trust right now?

9. PRACTICE: This whole series will be spent in the Apostles' Creed. For your weekly faith practice with your group, we encourage you to end by saying the Apostles' Creed together. Perhaps you will memorize it by the end of Lent! Try to really think about the words and their meaning as you say them out loud.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead.

The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there, He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.