

“When a Truth Captures Your Imagination...” (Union with Christ)
(Study 6 of “Spiritual Processing Group: Sonship B” Series)

Opening Question (10-15 Minutes) [Choose one of the following questions...]

1. What things would you do in the first 2 weeks if you inherited 100 million dollars?
 - How does discussing the topic of money make you feel?
 - Why is that? (How would you describe your relationship with money?)
2. Who in your life feels unconditional- they would never reject me and understand me?
 - Describe this person- how do you know him or her? what does it feel like to be around him or her? what kinds of things do you all enjoy doing or talking about?

Let’s take a look at a story Jesus told about how a Kingdom of uncountable riches with a King who is unconditionally generous...

Scripture Study (15 Minutes)

Read Matthew 13:31-33

(Read the parable aloud: have 2 people read it slowly, 1st in the ESV then in the NLT translation)

1. Be quiet for 30 seconds. Think or write. Now what are your first impressions?
 - What’s your emotional, gut-reaction?
 - Ask a question you have (or can think of).
 - Volunteer a thought or comment- about a verse or the whole passage.
2. What is Jesus saying about life with God by describing it as growing from seed to tree?
 - How does life with God feel or look like a smallest mustard seed?
 - When does life with God feel or look like a larger than tree?
3. What is Jesus saying about life with God by describing it as leaven (or yeast)?
 - How does life with God look like a pinch of yeast?
 - Describe a time when life with God seemed suddenly full of His presence?

Scripture Passage (Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven)

Matthew, Chapter 13- English Standard Version Translation (ESV): He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”

Matthew, Chapter 13- New Living Translation (NLT): Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ Jesus also used this illustration: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

Group Discussion (25-30 minutes)

Spiritual Exercise: Two Readings and Reflections

“The Power of a Truth Capturing Your Imagination” (From an interview with Rankin Wilbourne)

Can I get a volunteer who hasn't read yet to read the following quote out loud?

“...Christ is with us and Christ is for us. You are united to the one who this very moment sits at the right hand of God. He represents you as your champion and as your advocate. That should give us unrivaled confidence. We are so secure. We are never alone...You are ‘in Christ’ [and] ‘Christ is in you’ (Col. 1:24). And He is even closer to you than you could imagine. ‘Do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?’ (2 Cor. 13:5). I am suggesting that no, many of us do not realize this about ourselves...there is a gap between the [glorious] inheritance we’ve been given and our present experience of how we see ourselves...Do we know the riches of our inheritance? Imagine you inherited a bank account with \$100 million, bequeathed to you by someone who loved you dearly. You are aware of this treasure. You have been given a deposit guaranteeing your inheritance (Eph. 1:14). But suppose you have never drawn down on this fortune and choose instead to remain in dire poverty. From one point of view you are exceedingly wealthy, but insofar as how you live, you remain a pauper. You know you are wealthy beyond imagining, but you don’t really know your wealth. Does this not describe how so many of us are living?”

1. Is there a phrase or sentence you'd like to hear again? [Ask the reader to re-read that]
2. What strikes you about this quote? (It could be a thought, a question, or a comment.)
 - Spend a moment imagining Christ is with us and for us, as a warrior champion and legal advocate [...] What strikes you about either of those images?
 - Spend a moment imagining Christ is in you, like a deposit for 100 million dollars [...] What strikes you about thin images?
3. Do you feel that gap between knowing these truths about Jesus in your head as a concept and knowing in your heart as an everyday experience?
 - If so, give a personal example of how you live as a poor person spiritually...
 - What do our actions look like when we live as if we are poor in God?
 - What do our relationships look like when we live as if we are poor in God?
 - What do we think and feel on the inside when we live as if we are poor in God?
4. What are some ways we can bridge this imagination gap about how we see ourselves?
 - For instance, how you would live differently if you saw yourself as “*exceedingly wealthy*” spiritually?
 - How would you think differently?
 - How would you feel different?
 - How would you act differently?

“The Power of a Truth Changing Your Life”
(From Jack Miller’s “When Crisis Hits” and “Dealing with Rejection”)

Can I get a final volunteer to read this second quote out loud?

“As I deepen in honesty with [God], his presence with me grows ever stronger. There is nothing sweeter or purer than to know Christ is with me, whether my life is long or short...I can find in his friendship the most important thing in life- the satisfying of my deepest longing to be loved unconditionally by someone who fully understands me [...] [He is] the only person who really loves you all the way, just as you are. You must believe his love for you is unconditional. He died on the cross not because you are a good person, but because of his compassion for you. He suffered...for your pride and bitter anger, and you can know that God is now your friend and hears all your prayers.”

1. Is there a phrase or sentence you’d like to hear again? [Ask the reader to re-read that]
2. What strikes you about this quote? (It could be a thought, a question, or a comment.)
 - In what ways does Jack Miller describe being fully known and loved in this quote?
3. What is hardest to believe about Jesus’ friendship with you?
 - Why do you think that is so hard?
 - Is there something in your story that feels like it relates?
4. Imagine again: how you would live differently if you saw yourself as God’s friend, as “really love[d] ...all the way, just as you are”?
 - How would you think differently?
 - How would you feel different?
 - How would you act differently?

Group Prayer (10-15 Minutes)

Ideas for Communal and Personal Prayer.

- Share for yourself, and pray for the person sitting at **1 o’clock** from you
1. Here is a reflection questions to ask yourself, and- if time permits- share about:
What’s one thing you’re processing about how you relate to God?
 - (Is there something you’re feeling or thinking from the spiritual exercise- maybe a question or comment?)
 - Is there a praise, a confession, a word of thanks, or a request you’d like to make about what you’re processing?
 2. Is there something else going on that what can we pray about for you?