

1 John and Prodigal Son

Scripture: 1 John, Luke 15:11-32

Scripture Verse: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so you may know that you have eternal life." John 5:13

Main Truth: God's children can know for sure that they have eternal life and can live that life for God

(Show kids the book of 1 John). John, whose book we've been studying this year, also wrote a letter called 1 John. He wrote this to people who were worried that they would lose their eternal life if they sinned. Boys and girls, God's children can know for sure that they have eternal life.

John wrote to the worried people, "Do not be afraid. All you have to do to have eternal life is trust in Jesus." See, Jesus is the only perfect One who never sinned. When we trust in Him, we receive eternal life because of who Jesus is. Our eternal life depends on Jesus, not us, so we know that once we are saved, we will always have eternal life. Our verse today is from 1 John 5:13 (read from Bible).

We're going to look at a story now from the book of Luke that shows that God's children can know for sure that they are saved and saved forever. There was a man who had two sons. The younger son said, "Dad, give me all of my inheritance money now! I want to go spend it and party with my friends." The father gave the son what he asked. The son took his money and went on his way. He quickly spent all his money living foolishly. Then a famine came in that land and there was no food. The son was poor and starving. He went and hired himself out to work hard feeding pigs. He was so hungry he wanted to start eating the pigs' food! No one cared about him- they wouldn't even give him that pig food. Then all of a sudden he realized, "My father's servants live way better than this! They never go hungry. I have been wrong. I will go back to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'" So the son got up and walked back to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with love and care for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son started in with his speech, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

What was the father going to do? Was he going to make him a servant? No! The father said to a servant, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on my son. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Make some food! We're going to celebrate and have a big party! For this son of mine was lost and now he is found!" So they celebrated.

In this story, God is like the father and people who believe in Jesus are like the son. Once we believe that God sent Jesus to save us, we become God's children. Well, in this story, that son made bad choices. He sinned and went far from his father. But, even though he sinned, he was still his father's child. That's the good news boys and girls. No matter what we do, once we are God's child, we will always be God's child. And when we realize that we have done wrong, and come back to be with Him, He always takes us back with loving arms- just like the father did in the story. This story shows, just like John's letter, that God's children can know for sure that they have eternal life forever.

Last week we learned that being close to Jesus helps us be like Him. 1 John and this story in Luke talk about this as well. That son, when he was away from his father, he was living selfishly and then ended

up starving and alone. This is a picture of what happens to us when we choose to live away from our Father, God. We end up in darkness and miss out on the good life we have when we are close to God. When we are close to God, obeying Him and loving like He does, we are walking in the light. This kind of life brings us true joy and glorifies God. So, when we put our trust in Jesus we can know for sure that we will have eternal life forever no matter what. And when obey God and love like He does, we will enjoy being close to God.

Questions:

Whose true words are in the Bible? God's.

What do we have to do to have eternal life? Trust in Jesus.

Once we trust in Jesus can our eternal life be taken away of will we always have our eternal life? We will always have our eternal life.

Did the son in the story stay with His father or did he leave and live foolishly? He left and lived foolishly.

When he did this did he stop being his father's child, or was he still his father's child? He was still his father's child.

When we sin do we stop be God's child or are still God's child? We are still God's child.

Did the father in the story make his son a servant or did he hug him and throw a party for him? He hugged him and threw a party for him.

When we believe that God sent Jesus to die for our sins, whose child are we forever? God's child.

Who do we enjoy being close to when we obey God and love others? God.

Toddler Story:

John wrote a letter to people who believe in Jesus.

John wanted them to understand that once they believe in Jesus, they are God's child forever.

God's children can know for sure they have eternal life.

Eternal life from God lasts forever and ever and can never be taken away.

Eternal life from God starts when we believe in Jesus.

When we choose to obey God and love like He does, we can enjoy being close to God.

And being close to God is the best way to live.

Tell twice in a row since the story is short.

Hymn suggestions:

Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me (Jesus loves me Jesus loves me He is always, always near. If I do but love and trust Him there is nothing I need fear).

Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus (2nd verse- I'm so glad I learned to trust Him precious Jesus, savior, friend. And I know that He is with me, He'll be with me to the end.)

The Lord's my shepherd (5th verse- Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me; And in God's house forever more my dwelling place shall be.)