

JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

A NEWSTORY CHURCH SERIES

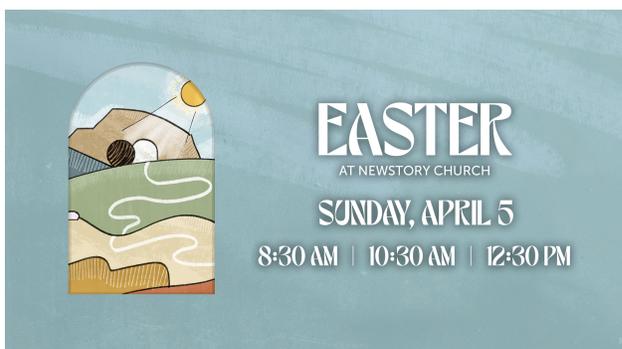


Pt5: The Prodigal Father

Pastor Tom Kang

Ice Breaker: Think back to a time you made a bad decision and had to go back and face someone – maybe a parent, a friend, or a boss. You don't have to share all the details! What was harder for you – making the mistake or having to go back?

1. Jesus tells this parable directly to Pharisees who were muttering about Him eating with sinners (Luke 15:1-2). How does knowing the audience change the way you hear the story? Who do you think felt more uncomfortable by the end and why - the tax collectors and sinners or the Pharisees?
2. The younger son's request for his inheritance was essentially saying "you're worth more to me dead than alive." And the father just...does it. No lecture, no guilt trip. What does that tell us about how God responds to people who want to walk away?
3. The Greek word for "wild living" is *asōtōs* (without salvation, beyond rescue). Have you ever lived in that headspace - maybe not necessarily partying (or maybe so), but nevertheless convinced you'd gone too far for it to matter anymore? What kept you there, and what broke through?
4. In first-century culture, a patriarch never ran - it meant hiking up your robes and exposing yourself to public shame. The father runs anyway, intercepting his son before the village can perform the *kezazah* (cutting off ceremony). How does that reframe the father's run from a simple sentimental moment into something costlier?
5. The older brother says "all these years I've been *slaving* for you" - servant language, not son language. Tim Keller wrote that "you can be alienated from God either by breaking his rules or by keeping all of them diligently." Where have you caught yourself treating obedience more like a transaction than a relationship?
6. Henri Nouwen spent months sitting with Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* and eventually wrote: "The question is not 'How am I to find God?' but 'How am I to let myself be found by Him?'" Which is harder for you - believing God is running toward you, or letting yourself be caught?
7. Jesus leaves the parable unfinished - the older brother is standing outside the feast and we never find out if he goes in. Why do you think Jesus (and Luke) left it open? What ending are you writing with your life right now?



Easter is almost here! This year we are making more room for you to invite a friend to hear the good news! We will offer three services on Easter at 8:30, 10:30, and 12:30.

We will also have **Good Friday Service** on April 3 at 7:30 pm (both in-person & online). Join us for a wonderful night of worship.