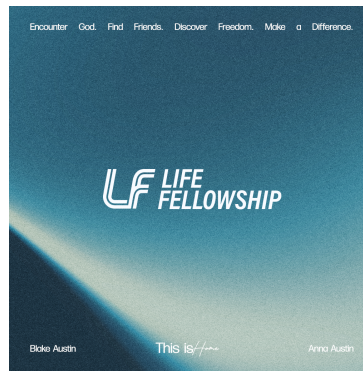




Homecoming | Blake & Anna Austin | 07.26.26

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion.

Sermon Overview

This sermon explored what it means to truly belong to the family of God through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Using the story of the prodigal son and the truth of who God is in each person of the Trinity, Blake and Anna walked us through what it looks like to stop living like orphans and start living as sons and daughters who are fully at home with the Father.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- When you hear the word "home," what comes to mind? Is it a comforting word or a complicated one for you? Why?

Point 1: We Were Made From Relationship and For Relationship

- Genesis 1:26 describes God saying "let us" make man in "our" image, pointing to the Trinity as a family within Himself. What does it mean to you personally that you were created in the image of a relational God?
- How does knowing that God created you out of the overflow of love He already had within Himself change the way you see your own worth and purpose?

Point 2: The Father Gives Us Belonging

- Pastor Blake described the Father in the prodigal son story as hiking up his robe and running past the gates of shame and judgment toward his son. How does that image of the Father challenge or confirm what you have believed about God?
- Pastor Anna said, "God is not a projection of our earthly family. He is the healing original that every family was meant to reflect." In what ways have your experiences with family or authority figures shaped how you approach God the Father? How might those assumptions need to be revisited?
- Have you ever approached God the way the younger son did, rehearsing a speech about why you are not worthy? What would it look like to simply run toward the Father instead?

Point 3: The Son Reveals the Father and Brings Us Home

- Colossians 1:15 describes Jesus as the image of the invisible God. How does looking at the life of Jesus in the Gospels help you better understand the heart of the Father?
- Pastor Anna said, "No matter what your past looked like, no matter what you did this weekend, no matter what you did earlier this year, welcome home. Shame off of you." Is there an area of your life where you have been allowing shame to keep you from fully receiving that welcome? What would it look like to let that go?
- Ephesians 2:19 says we are no longer strangers and aliens but members of God's household. Do you actually live as though that is true? What is the difference between knowing it intellectually and living it out daily?

Point 4: The Holy Spirit Confirms and Transforms Our Identity

- Pastor Blake described the Holy Spirit as leading us not just to a destination but to a person. How has the Holy Spirit led you toward a deeper understanding of who you are in Christ?

- Pastor Blake shared personally that his background of abandonment sometimes causes him to slip into a slavery mindset, seeking approval and bending toward what others think of him. Can you relate to that kind of pattern? What does it look like practically to let the Holy Spirit bear witness against those thoughts?
- Romans 8 describes a shift from a spirit of slavery leading to fear to a spirit of adoption by which we cry out to God as Father. Where on that spectrum do you find yourself right now?

Closing Reflection on the Two Sons

- Pastors Blake and Anna pointed out that both the younger son and the older son were standing outside the joy of the Father's house. One thought he was too bad to be loved. The other thought he had been too good to be overlooked. Which of these two postures do you most identify with right now?
 - The father in the story went out to both sons. What does it mean to you that God pursues both the rebellious and the self-righteous with the same heart of love?
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Practical Applications

1. **Identify your posture toward the Father.** This week, spend time in honest reflection. Are you approaching God with a scraps mentality, as though you have to earn your way back? Or have you been living in the house while remaining emotionally distant from Him? Write down what you discover and bring it to the Lord in prayer.
2. **Pray using the name Abba Father.** Romans 8 says the Spirit leads us to cry out "Abba, Father." This week, intentionally begin your prayer times with that name. Notice how it changes the tone of your conversation with God.
3. **Celebrate someone else's homecoming.** The older son's anger at his brother's welcome is a warning for all of us. Is there someone in your life or your church community whose restoration you have struggled to celebrate? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the Father's perspective on that person.
4. **Memorize one truth about your identity.** Choose one verse from this sermon, such as Ephesians 2:19 or Romans 8:15-16, and commit it to memory this week. When the Holy

Spirit identifies a moment where you are slipping into an orphan mindset, use that verse as an anchor.

5. **Have a conversation about belonging.** If you are in a season of feeling distant from God or from the church, share that honestly with someone in your small group this week. You do not have to carry that alone. The family of God is designed to welcome you home together.

Key Takeaways

- God was already a family before creation. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed in relationship, and out of the overflow of that love, He created us in His image and for relationship.
 - The Father gives us belonging. He is not distant, harsh, or withholding. His very essence is love, and He runs toward us past shame and judgment.
 - The Son reveals the Father and brings us home. Jesus is the perfect image of the invisible God, and His blood covers us so that we are no longer strangers but members of God's household.
 - The Holy Spirit confirms and transforms our identity. He leads us, frees us from slavery and fear, and bears witness that we are children of God.
 - Both sons in the prodigal son story were standing outside the joy of the Father's house. Whether we think we are too bad to be loved or too good to be overlooked, the Father goes out to both.
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Closing Prayer Prompt

Close your group time by praying together using these three movements:

- Thank the Father for running toward you past shame and judgment.
- Thank the Son for making a way home through His blood.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to bear witness in each person's heart this week that they are not orphans but children of God.

