

WE REJECT GOD'S JOY

STORY: FALL

BIG TRUTH: WE REJECT GOD'S JOY

1 Chronicles 16:26-27; Isaiah 44:9-11; Psalm 16:1-4, 11; John 15:10-11; 16:14; 17:13; 1 John 5:3

BIBLE VERSE: JEREMIAH 2:13

"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

BIG IDEAS

- Our sin blinds us to God's goodness.
- Our sin causes us to look for happiness in empty things.
- Our sin separates us from true joy.

BIBLE STORY: LUKE 14:14-24

Jesus told many stories during His ministry on earth. One story He told was about a man who invited guests to a great banquet or meal. The guests all refused his invitation and gave many excuses about why they couldn't come. They all chose to do other things besides experience the great banquet that the man had prepared for them. The invited guests were blind to the goodness of the banquet just as people are blind to God's goodness. Our sin keeps us from really experiencing true joy that is found only in Jesus.

STORY: FALL

Everything was perfect in the world until we broke it. When humanity chose to sin, the world that was once perfect became messed up and broken. Sin is ultimately a rejection of God Himself. Because of sin bad things happen, we experience all types of pain, and death has come into the world. All of creation groans and wishes that the world could be perfect and good like it was before.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know that:

- Our sin is a rejection of God that separates us from Him



Every child should feel:

- A need to have a right relationship with God



Every child should:

- Trust what God tells us about the depth of our sin and brokenness



Every child should want:

- A restored relationship with God

FAMILY DEVOTION: A BANQUETING TABLE

God sent His Son to pay our sin debt. We can find true joy and happiness when we place saving faith in Jesus, but our sin blinds us and keeps us from going to God's banqueting table. We miss the true happiness that is found in Him and at His table.

BIBLE VERSE: JEREMIAH 2:13

“For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

God has given His people all they need, but they reject Him.

- Jeremiah writes of the wickedness of God's special people, the Israelites.
- They were chosen by God to be His people.
- He had provided for them and given them all that they needed.
- Even though He had been true and faithful, they rejected Him.
- The Israelites turned away from God and His provision and protection.
- They chose to worship false gods and to sin against God.
- They rejected all that He did for them and gave to them.

God is the source of living water to His people.

- Living water would have represented flowing water, such as streams or rivers, to the Israelites.
- It was water that was fresh and usually clean.
- Jeremiah speaks of God as the living water, yet the Israelites rejected Him.
- The two other water sources the Israelites would be familiar with are wells and cisterns, which were built to catch runoff water.
- The cisterns would also contain dirt and other impurities.
- The cisterns Jeremiah says they chose instead of God were broken cisterns.
- A broken cistern would not have provided very much water at all, if any.
- This is what our sin causes us to choose.
- We choose wickedness and empty things instead of the goodness of God.

BIBLE STORY: LUKE 14:15-24

The Banqueting Table

Opening Illustration:

Bring in enough tall socks for each child to have one. Bring in several bags of dry beans or rice. Use a plastic cup to fill the bottom portion of the sock with rice or beans. Help the children tie the sock using the tall section of the sock. Double knot the sock so the rice and beans are secure. Next, mark a spot on the floor. Have the children take turns standing far away from the mark and tossing their beanbag socks. Talk with the children about how no matter how hard we try, we still miss the mark. Talk with them about how we cannot save ourselves or fix our brokenness.

- We may try hard every day, but we cannot save ourselves.
- Only Jesus can pay our sin debt and give us salvation.

BIG IDEA: OUR SIN BLINDS US TO GOD'S GOODNESS.**God is good and all He offers is good.¹**

- God is perfect and all He does is perfect.
- Everything God offers His people is good.
- The story of a man preparing a great banquet for his guests is a story of how God invites people into His family.
- God offers all that He has to us.
- His love, mercy, and grace are good and are available to us.



Using a dictionary, help the children define the word "good". Talk with them about how God is always good and everything He does is always good.

Our sinful hearts cause us to miss out on God's goodness.

- The guests invited to the man's banquet chose not to come.
- He had prepared a great meal, or feast, using his very best.
- The guests missed out on the feast because they were caught up in their own lives.
- We are blind to the good things God is offering us because we are so focused on our own lives.
- Our sinful hearts blind us to just how good God is.
- Our hearts trick us into missing out on God's goodness.

*When the man prepared the banquet, why did the guests not come? (They were busy with their own lives.)
What does our sin cause us to miss? (We miss God's goodness.)*

1. Psalm 119:68: All that God is and does is good.

BIG IDEA: OUR SIN CAUSES US TO LOOK FOR HAPPINESS IN EMPTY THINGS.**True happiness and joy are found in Jesus.**

- Jesus is the only way to have true happiness and joy.
- He paid our sin debt and only He can offer true joy.
- Jesus is like the man giving a great banquet.
- He has prepared His best and is offering His best, yet people refuse it.

Our sinful hearts cause us to look for joy in ourselves.

- The guests invited to the banquet missed the joy they could have had.
- They looked for joy in themselves and their own lives.
- They rejected the banquet and the joy they could have had.
- We look for joy in ourselves.
- We try to be good enough and to do enough good things to save ourselves.
- We try to find our own peace and happiness instead of turning to God.

Our sin makes us look for joy in meaningless things.

- The guests invited to the banquet chose to miss the banquet because of empty things.
- They were busy with their own daily lives and chose not to go to the banquet.
- They were blinded to the truth that true joy could be found at the banquet.
- We look for joy in empty things.
- We look for joy in activities, jobs and hobbies.
- These aren't bad things, but they cannot give us true eternal joy.
- Only Jesus can give us true eternal joy.



Bring in an empty box that is wrapped in wrapping paper with a large bow. Show it to the children and ask them to guess what is inside of the box. Allow them to share their guesses and then ask them to share what they hope is in the box. Allow them to open the box and discover it's empty. Talk with them about how we get excited and look for happiness in things that cannot really bring us happiness.

Where do we look for happiness? (We look for happiness in empty things.)

BIG IDEA: OUR SIN SEPARATES US FROM TRUE JOY.²**Those who reject Jesus are separated from true joy.**

- Our sin separates us from God.
- Our sin causes us to turn away from God and to reject Jesus.
- The guests invited to the banquet rejected the joy they would have experienced at the banquet.
- They were not invited again or asked to another banquet.
- They missed the chance for true joy.
- Our sin causes us to miss a chance for true joy.
- We are separated from Jesus, the only source of joy.



Sing “I’ve Got The Joy, Joy, Joy” with the children. Talk with them about how true joy is found in Jesus.

Our sin can separate us eternally from joy.

- The man giving the banquet did not offer another banquet to the first guests.
- Those guests were forever separated from the goodness of the banquet.
- Our sin can separate us forever from God.
- If we choose our sin over saving faith in Jesus, we, too, will forever be separated from the goodness of Jesus.
- We will be separated from true joy that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus.

2. Proverbs 10:28: True joy is found only in right living for God. Our sin keeps us from this true joy.

HOOKS



KNOW

Banqueting Table

Gather together balloons, a tablecloth, and other decorations. Help the children decorate a table in the room as if you are having a banquet. Once you finish decorating the table, ask the children how they'd feel if they invited people to their banquet and no one came. Talk with the children about how the invited guests didn't come to the man's banquet. We don't experience God's goodness either because we're blinded by our sin.



DO

- The invited guests were blind to the goodness that they would have experienced at the man's banquet.
- They thought the things they were doing were more important or would bring them more happiness.
- Our sin makes us blind to God's goodness, too.



FEEL



WANT

Invited Guests

Give each child a blank sheet of paper and ask them to create an invitation to a party that he or she would like to give. It can be an invitation to a birthday party, a special holiday, or just a friend party. As they decorate their invitations with stickers, markers, and crayons, talk with the children about how the man's invited guests didn't come to his party. They were blinded by the busyness of their own lives. We, too, are blinded to God's goodness by our sin.

- We don't see God's goodness because we are blinded by our sin.
- We may think we can find joy and happiness in other things, but only God can give us true joy and happiness.