

## WHAT IF....

**Read Luke 15:11-32**

1st Sunday of Lent, February 18, 2018

We are all familiar with Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. All of the characters and actions in this parable resemble the characters and actions in our opioid epidemic. A child leaves home, parents worry every day, the lost child in their addiction lives in a "far away land," by the grace of God the child "comes to himself" and returns home. The parents and community celebrate the return of the lost child but the older brother is not thrilled with the return of the brother. Did Jesus have our family, church and community in mind when he told this parable?

Over the next several weeks we will use this familiar parable as our guide to honestly look at the opioid epidemic and ask "what if...?" The hope is we will not spend our devotion time wondering what if the parents did something different, or what if the prodigal son did not leave, but asking God what can I do to keep this from happening again? What can I do when I meet a child lost in a faraway land? What if I, what if we, as the church were involved in this parable...how could God have used us to prevent, comfort, care for, support and rejoice with the family of the prodigal son?

Read the parable again slowly. Give the characters in the story names of people you know who are directly involved with the opioid epidemic. Ask God where we should be in this parable.

What if God answers our petition?

It is not enough to open the doors of our sanctuary and hope the epidemic ends. We must leave our sanctuaries and enter the story.

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank you for the parable of the prodigal son. Open our eyes to the prodigal sons and daughters all around us. As we pray for them, open our hearts to reach out to them and help them in their time of need as their lives are being destroyed by their uncontrollable actions. God bless them in their lost condition make them aware they need You. Amen.

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