

Lost and Found; Luke 15:8-10

1. Care
 - a. It is easy to get lost.
 - i. I drove to Buena Park, CA, in the late 1970's.
 - ii. My aunts, uncles, and grandparents on my dad's side lived in Buena Park, and we visited often (We lived in Downey, CA).
 - iii. I remember not knowing where I was, but I would run into the freeway if I kept driving down this road.
 - iv. I wanted to get home, so I had a vested interest in being found (or getting un-lost).
 - b. In the previous parable, the shepherd has 100 sheep, and one gets lost.
 - i. Luke 15:3-5: "So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing."
 - ii. The idea here is that God has lots of followers (sheep), but He cares about the one who wanders away.
 - iii. Have you ever lost your keys? Or your wallet?
 1. Why or how they got lost is insignificant.
 2. We turn the house and the car upside down to find them.
 3. We call the places we have been and ask if someone turned them in.
 4. We move heaven and earth to find them.
 - c. This parable is about people.
 - i. People walk away from the church all the time, yet God views them as valuable. Do we?
 - ii. Matthew 9:36-38: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
2. Value
 - a. The coin represented ten percent of what she had, a significant amount.
 - i. The Israelites tithed ten percent.
 1. Maybe someone with 100 coins would not go through such an exhaustive search.
 2. Maybe they wouldn't value the one against the 99.
 - ii. The shepherd left the 99 to look for the one.
 1. We may think lost souls are insignificant, but God does not.
 2. Do we view the lost souls like God? Or are they insignificant compared to the rest of our congregation?
 - b. Do we value all our members?
 - i. Shouldn't we visit those we have not seen for some time?
 - ii. Shouldn't we notice they are gone long before we do?

- iii. Matthew 14:13–14: “Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”
3. Effort.
- a. It takes effort.
 - i. We can teach everything but effort.
 - ii. Effort comes from a desire to see the lost restored.
 - iii. Effort comes from a love of God and His people.
 - b. The shepherd could reason, “The sheep had everything here in the fold: safety, food, and guidance.”
 - i. The sheep chose to wander off.
 - ii. The sheep must accept the consequences of their foolish choices.
 - c. The text of the lost coin is apparent.
 - i. She lit the lamp.
 - ii. She swept the house.
 - iii. She searched for the coin.
 - iv. She put a lot of effort into finding the coin.
 - d. What kind of effort do we put into bringing God’s souls back into the flock?
 - i. Our first attempt may fail, and so may our second or even our third.
 - ii. We must keep trying.
 - iii. I am familiar with the text about the pearls before swine and shaking the dust off our feet for those who refuse to listen.
 - iv. I agree that there will be times when we conclude that God must be sending someone else.
 - v. That idea does not negate the amount of effort we must put into bringing the lost back to the fold.
 - e. Jesus was willing to die (and did die) for the lost.
 - i. What are we willing to do?
 - ii. Matthew 20:31–34: “The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?” They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.”
4. Urgency.
- a. In cases of missing persons, the first 48 hours are critical.
 - i. If there is not a significant break in the case, chances are law enforcement will not find them.
 - ii. The shepherd knows this and leaves the 99 to find the one.
 - iii. We must feel an urgency in reaching lost souls.
 - iv. We must act.
 - b. Compassion moves us to act.

- i. In the following parable, the father has compassion for the son who left and spent all his inheritance on a loose living.
 - ii. Luke 15:20: “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.”
 - iii. The father’s compassion moved him to run out and meet his son, to embrace him, and to kiss him.
 - iv. Our lack of understanding and effort often limits our compassion.
 - 1. We don’t understand what the person has been through; we only see it through our understanding of justice (they deserved what they got).
 - 2. The son left his father after asking for his inheritance before his father died.
 - 3. The son “squandered his property in reckless living” (verse 13b).
 - 4. Most of us would be like the second son, indignant and angry.
 - 5. Like the older son, we would say the younger son got what he deserved. This attitude directly reflects the amount of effort we put forth.
 - v. Luke 15 is about sinners.
 - 1. The tax collectors and sinners drew near Him (verse 1).
 - 2. This man receives sinners (verse 2).
 - 3. The angels rejoice over one sinner who repents (verses 7 and 10).
 - 4. The son sinned against his father (verses 18 and 21).
 - 5. God has an entire chapter in Luke’s Gospel dedicated to letting us know that we can always return to Him and that He is waiting for us with open arms (a robe, ring, and fattened calf).
 - vi. Mark 1:40–41: “And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.”
5. Rejoice.
- a. God cares about lost souls.
 - i. You can see this in all three parables.
 - 1. Leaving the 99 for the one.
 - 2. a meticulous search for the coin.
 - 3. The father is watching and waiting for his lost son.
 - b. We can see why God rejoices (and we should, too) over their return.
 - i. Luke 15:7: “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
 - ii. Luke 15:10: “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
 - iii. Luke 15:22–24: “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”
 - iv. Someone so precious has returned into the fold from wandering.

6. Seek and save.
 - a. The whole reason for Jesus' sacrifice was to redeem us, to bring us back into fellowship with God.
 - b. Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."