

J.J.

LOST AND FOUND

Luke 15

Luke 15: 1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." 3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

8 Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." 10 In the same way, I tell you there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate." So he divided his property between them.

13 Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him : Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." 20 So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

PRAY

INTRODUCTION :

This August is Mission Month.

When I was a young pastor, I met a person on the street and invited him to go to church. And so he asked me what do I do and I told him that I am a pastor. His first question to me in Tagalog “Anong bawal sa inyo?” (What’s prohibited in your church?)

It seems that we Christians are known for our list of do’s and don’ts.

There’s this story about this Sunday school class.

During Sunday school, the teacher was teaching about being obedient to their parents. She said that “Christians are nice people who never complain, argue, or talk back.” She then asked, “Who is a good Christian here.” A boy quickly raised his hands and said, “My Dad is a good Christian.” The teacher asked “Why?” The boy replied, “It’s because he never complains, argues or talks back to my Mom.”

But is that really our goal when we become a Christian – just to become nice people?

But what is our primary mission as a Christian?

In order for us to understand we must take a peek of what’s inside God’s heart.

If you want to know what’s inside the heart of God, **these three parables** perfectly illustrate it. This is God’s heartbeat, this one is closest to His heart.

- **GOD CAME FOR THE LOST.**

Luke 15: 1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Note : **Remember, tax collectors were the worst of them all in the eyes of the Jews because they were regarded as traitors.**

Remember, the Jews were under Roman occupation and they hated it. There were even Zealots who are branded as terrorists at that time who wanted to overthrow the government (one of the disciples of Jesus is a Zealot, his name is Simon). In order to fund Pax Romana (means Roman peace), the Romans had to charge taxes and **they opened a franchise for those Jews** who would collect taxes for them. They would just need a certain amount, and the Romans tax everything, (e.g. even the wheels of a cart), and the tax collectors can add to it whatever they want. So these tax collectors really became rich by collecting taxes from their fellow Jews. They were scums. In fact, they weren’t even allowed to enter the synagogue.

Sinners were the harlots, the prostitutes, the murderers, the thieves, and etc. and they were all gathering around Jesus.

Greek word for gathering around is in the active which means they were constantly gathering around Jesus Christ and the Pharisees questioned it.

“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Remember AT THAT TIME to eat at somebody’s home is to give them honor.

Illustration : Remember the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-9 Jesus entered Jericho and Zacchaeus who is a **chief tax collector** (so he is the scum of scums) wanted to see Jesus and Jesus said to him that he will stay at his house. What honor he has given Zacchaeus and again

Luke 19:7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

Same thing as the Pharisees said. And then Zacchaeus repented and in verse 10, Jesus said
Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

The heart of Jesus is to seek and save the lost.

How do we know that?

His very name Himself is Jesus which is Yeshua which means "The Lord saves"

Matthew 1 : 21... and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

God is seeking the sinner because He wants to save them.

Save them from what? From the dangers of hell, from the hopelessness without Christ.

Who are these people? Every sinner, even the worst ones.

And ever since man sinned, God is seeking the sinner to come back to Him right from the very beginning.

Genesis 3:8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Even at this point, God is seeking people and asking them "Where are you?"

Illustration : One theologian branded God as the "The Hound of Heaven"

Remember, the Bible is not about man seeking God. It's about God seeking man.

And who is he seeking?

Now the tax collectors and sinners

The scums of the earth and the sinners

God did not say, He only loves those who got it right, people who go to church, people who study the Bible, people who gives tithes and offering, He loves the world, men who are sinners like you and me.

Even in the OT,Bible, God says he is seeking the lost

Ezekiel 34:16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays.

Illustration : I remember I have a classmate in university who was a homosexual and when I say homosexual, has a boyfriend, sleeps with the boyfriend and etc. But I have three born-again classmates at that time and they loved him and were friends with him and so was able to share the gospel to him. Now this classmate of mine has a wife and kids. And when I talked with him, after university, his voice was even manly when before he talks like a girl.

Remember this : We are not here to change people. We can never change people. Only the Holy Spirit can change people. Our job is to tell them that WE (you, me and everybody) are all sinners, offended God and we have no hope without Christ. And that

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Why do we need to seek and save the lost?

- **GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE LOST**

You see the parables :

4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"

Remember : The shepherd owns those sheep and as the Bible says, they know each sheep by name.

- ✓ **This means God cares about each person because he owns them.** He cares for us so much. How much? He knows the number of hair on our head.

Illustration : One of the worst nightmares of a parent is when their child gets lost or suddenly somebody snatches their child and takes them.

One time when we were travelling and nearby there was a carousel. But there was this young mom who was standing and shouting at the top of her voice, panic is clearly seen on her face. She was shouting "Billy!" Obviously, she lost Billy! She was going to and fro and we can feel her fear, her panic and her anxiety.

I bet she would do anything to get her Billy back again and we surmised that Billy was snatched because if he was just around the carousel, then people would have noticed.

That's the same with the Lord, He longs to bring us back. His primary concern is our soul.

8 Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?"

Context : A silver coin during that time is called a drachma (Greek) or a denarii (Roman). It's equivalent to one day's wage. And remember, it's very important to a woman, because if a husband dies, she would need something to live on (because it's the job of the husband to take care of the wife and a widow during that time would have a hard time)

- ✓ **This means we are close to God's heart because each of us has value in God's eyes,** so valuable that he would search every nook and corner of the world to save us.

Illustration : A church who wanted more people to come to church decided to give \$1 reward for every person for each member for every people they bring to church. At the end of the service, they collect their money. A woman went to another church because she got frustrated. When asked why, she said, "I'm only worth \$1 over there?"

Brothers and sisters, we seek and save the lost because they have value in God's eyes.

HOW VALUABLE IS EACH PERSON?

1 Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed....

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect

Side note : Notice the two characters that Jesus immediately used? The shepherd and a woman, these are second class citizens, people who have no importance in the society during that time. It's a direct affront to the Pharisees propensity for self-importance. **Jesus identifies Himself with what society sees as unimportant because He sees them as important.**

Again, our Lord's favorite term is Son of Man, though He has no sin, He identifies Himself with the sinner and that's the reason why He took our punishment on the cross in our behalf.

Look at the concern of the father to the lost son.

. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." 20 So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

This means the dad was always on the lookout if his son would return because our Father in heaven is concerned about the lost.

- **GOD CELEBRATES WHEN THE LOST IS FOUND**

5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." 10 In the same way, I tell you there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Quote : You will know what's in the heart of a person by knowing their concerns and what they celebrate.

This is why we know we are looking at God's heart because we see what gives Him joy.

Note : We know what's inside God's heart because of two things : what He is concerned about and what He celebrates.

When you talk to people, you already know what's inside their heart when they tell you what they are concerned about.

For example : Pastor, please pray for my mom who is sick...it means, her mom is close to the person's heart.

Or when they talk about their children or their spouse, they have a sparkle in their eyes.

You will know what's inside the heart of a person if they tell you what they are concerned about or what they celebrate about.

Illustration : Some of you might have seen my FB post about Tim Tebow : Let me read it for you. A day after former Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer said in a radio interview that he wished the man currently taking the snaps in Denver, Tim Tebow, would curb his references to Jesus Christ and his faith, Tebow responded.

Asked about Plummer's remarks in an interview on ESPN's First Take, Tebow said :

"If you're married, and you really love your wife, is it good enough to only say to your wife, "I love her" the day you got married? Or should you tell her every single day when you wake up and every opportunity? My relationship with Jesus Christ is the most important thing in my life. So anytime I get an opportunity to tell Him that I love Him or given an opportunity to shout Him out on national TV, I'm gonna take that opportunity. And so I look at it as a relationship that I have with Him that I want to give Him the honor and glory anytime I have the opportunity." - USA Today

Do you love the Lord? Then His concerns and His cause of celebration will be your concern and cause of celebration... THE SEEKING AND SAVING THE LOST.

CONCLUSION :

I was watching this TV show called "The Deadliest Catch". That show is all about different fishing boats who go into the Bering Sea to catch Alaskan King Crabs and Snow Crabs. It's very profitable. A deckhand can earn from \$150k to \$170k in just 3 months. And that's the problem, King Crab season is between October to January and you can only catch them in the Bering Sea. The Bering Sea is between Alaska and Russia. It's a very dangerous job. (300 deaths per year out of 100,000 fishermen. Fishermen either die by drowning or catching hypothermia). And the Bering Sea is a wild sea with big waves.

And fishing boats are really in competition with each other because there's money at stake. But one time, there was this deckhand in one of the boats who were fixing the crates at the side and a big wave caught him and he was now in the cold sea.

Remember, it's winter and when you are in the cold sea, at 0 degrees Celsius, you will easily go into hypothermia and be dead in between 15 to 45 minutes.

The boat was trying to find him and they cannot but there was a nearby fishing boat who was their fiercest competition saw the man and immediately went to him and scooped him up and saved him. He had to take off all his clothes and they had to wrap him in a blanket.

The captain of the fishing boat went to him and the man they saved was crying because he saved his life and the captain was also crying and people were relieved and celebrating.

It is during that time that they forgot they were competitors in business and knew they had that common bond – they were all fishermen in this dangerous job.

The reason I am telling this story is we are all different – some are rich, some are poor, some are different nationalities like Indians, Chinese, Polish and some have different religions or beliefs like Muslims, Jews, or atheist and some have a different lifestyle like ours and some of those lifestyles are even offensive to us. But there is one thing we have in common – WE ARE ALL SINNERS!

Just like what the father said to the son.

For this son of mine was dead is alive again; he was lost and is found. **AND IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF GRACE.**

And here's the thing, there are a lot of sinners like us who are out there who are OUT THERE IN THE OPEN SEA OF SIN WHO ARE lost just like we were before who needs to be saved – that's the reason why the church is here.

THE CHURCH IS THE RESCUE BOAT THAT GOD USES TO PICK THEM UP.

S.G.D.