



NOW & NEXT: STEPPING INTO GOD'S FUTURE TOGETHER | WEEK 02

Lost People

Primary Text: Luke 15 | Michael Stamaugh

Our Mission

We lead lost people to center their lives on Jesus.

Lost People are Valuable

Jesus tells three stories about lost things: a sheep, a coin, and a son. Three completely different ways of getting lost. A sheep that drifted without meaning to. A coin that had no say in the matter. A son who made every choice with eyes wide open and walked as far from home as his feet could take him.

Lost is not a category of people or a value statement about someone. Lost is a description of location. A lost person is not a worse person. They're not a lower tier of human being, or a project, or a problem to be managed. They are someone who is not where they belong, and someone is looking for them.

God created humanity in the image of God so that humanity would have a relationship with God. However, Genesis 3 reveals that humans believed a lie, sinned, and lost their home with God. Before removing them from the garden, God provided a covering for their shame and sin. However, humanity lost its relationship with God and became lost. We were created to be at home with God, but all of humanity is lost without Jesus.

The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine. The woman lights a lamp and sweeps her entire house for one coin. The father was watching for his son to return. The lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son were all in a location they did not belong. They were lost.

Lost People are Worth Searching For

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.
Luke 19:10

Jesus defined his mission as actively seeking and saving the lost. Not to wait at home for lost people to find their own way back, though the father in the story does wait. Jesus says he came to seek, actively, on purpose, into the wilderness, into the far country, into whatever pigpen a person has wandered into. Seeking lost people wasn't a side effect of Jesus's ministry. According to his own words, it was the mission.

According to 2020 US Census data, in Cascade County, roughly 31,913 of 84,414 people are counted as religious adherents of any kind, any faith. That's about 37.8 percent. That means 52,500 of our neighbors, people who live within several miles of this building, have no religious affiliation at all.

According to Pew Research, across Montana, the religiously unaffiliated went from 22 percent in 2007 to 39 percent by 2023-2024. A seventeen-point jump in sixteen years, one of the largest shifts of its kind anywhere in the country.

Lost People are Worth Celebrating When Found

In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

Luke 15:7

The shepherd joyfully carries the lost sheep home and invites his friends to celebrate. When the woman finds the lost coin, she calls her friends and neighbors to announce a celebration. When the lost son returns home, the father throws a huge party.

Who are you praying for?

Write down the names of three lost people you are praying for throughout these six weeks.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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