

## **PEOPLE ARE VALUABLE TO GOD**

Fall-Fest 2022 at WOWchurch this year was fantastic as you've seen footage of the excitement, the crowds, the Gospel presented and the response of many people. One odd thing that kept happening this year was the number of kids who got separated from their families – **LOST**.

- Someone would find them wandering through the crowd by themselves and bring them to the platform asking help to find the parents.
- There must have been 12 episodes of this happening this year.
- Being LOST from your child or family member is frightening, especially in this world today.
- I looked into the eyes of those kids and there was fear, bewilderment, anxiety.

I'm sure you know that feeling of losing something.  
The value of the item depends on how upsetting the **LOSTNESS** is.

When you find what was lost – **CELEBRATION/THANKFULNESS** are the common reactions.

When we look at LOSTNESS in relation to the world we are living in; the Bible describes God's attitude toward what has been **LOST**.

Jesus, Himself spoke many times about the lost condition of God's creation and God's concern over the LOSTness of mankind.

Luke 15:1-10 –

“Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that He was associating with such sinful people – even eating with them!

So Jesus told them this story: If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost **UNTIL HE FINDS IT?**

And when He has found it, he will JOYFULLY carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying REJOICE with me because I have found my lost sheep. **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!**

Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, REJOICE with me because I have found my lost coin. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

WOW – there are some real attitudes of people revealed in this story Jesus told that are still around with us today:

- All the sinners and people who've been messing up their lives...gather around Jesus to hear Him. People love Jesus, but they're not so sure about church-folk anymore. They REJOICE when they find their way out of LOSTNESS.
- The religious folks, those who think they're better than everyone else...can't stand this.

### 3 Truths about God's Heart:

#### 1. People are valuable to God

- The shepherd in this story represents God.
- Jesus - John 10, calls Himself the "Good Shepherd" who lays down His life for His sheep."
- The shepherd in the story has 100 hundred sheep.
- And 1 of them is lost.
- Surprisingly, the shepherd doesn't make a utilitarian statement:
  - He doesn't say, "If I leave the 99 to find the 1, I'm putting the 99 at risk, so I'll just have to count the lost sheep as an acceptable loss."
- We live in a "**throwaway – dispensable**" society today.
- Not many people are into fixing, repairing, restoring things.
- For many, it's easier & less time consuming and cost effective to just REPLACE rather than RESTORE.
- But the Lord is into RESTORATION of broken lives.
- Human lives are valuable to God; God sees the value of each person – life and has the power and interest to RESTORE.
- The shepherd feels that the 99 are safe enough in that moment, and he shows the immense value he places on each individual sheep and goes after the lost one.

Think of it this way:

- If you had 4 kids, and one of them got lost...FALL- FEST
- Would you ever say, "It's fine, I still have 3 more."

- No! Of course not! You better not think that way!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
**It's not a parable about how many you have left,  
but a parable about the value of what was lost.**

All people, are of immense value to God!

### **We see the other story of the LOST COIN.** Vv. 8-10

Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, RJOICE with me because I have found my lost coin. In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

We read this parable and say, "Big deal. The woman lost a nickel...why is she tearing the whole house apart? Just forget about it, count your losses and go on"

- But the worth of the coin was a Drachma - a day's wage.
- Roman soldiers were paid 1 Drachma per day.
- A citizen sitting on a Roman jury trial was paid ½ Drachma per day.
- So this single woman, [because it would have her in a married context] had lost \$50.00 of \$500.00.

Any single woman, especially a single mom, can relate to the loss of this lady, where every dollar is important to the budget.

### **God wants us to see the value He sees in people.**

2<sup>nd</sup> truth about God's heart for the Lost:

#### **2. God Is Relentlessly Searching For The Lost**

v. 4. We're told that the shepherd will go after the lost sheep...UNTIL

- HE FINDS IT!

That is God's heart towards His lost creation:

It's our sin that separates us from God...and makes us lost – Isa. 59:1-2

"The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is His ear too deaf to hear you call. It's your sins that have cut you off from God..."

But it's God's grace that brings us back to Him.

When you repent (as Jesus says), and you say you're sorry, and you turn your life over to Him...believing that Jesus died on the cross for you and is your Savior...

- You will be found...and will have new life.
- But you also have to want to be rescued when the Savior finds you.
- He'll never force you.

Too many sheep say, "Nah, I'd rather keep going out here on my own"

This was alarming when I heard this happened at Fall Fest 2022:

"When declaring the message; I made the statement that Jesus can deliver you out of your bondage and set you free from captivity; one of our people heard a young woman declare: **"I LIKE MY BONDAGE!"**

**You can see God's relentless pursuit in the parable of the lost coin as well:**

This woman is not going to give up until she finds her lost coin.

- It's not going to be easy to find a coin in her house; the houses were small and dark even in the daytime.
- No glass windows.
- Just little slits in the walls to let in some fresh air
- The chances of finding a coin in a dirt floor, in the dark, are not high.
- **But this woman is going to keep looking until she finds it.**
- And she is going to (don't miss this)...she's going to **WORK** hard to find it
- She's going to light a lamp...to improve her visibility
- She's going to methodically sweep the house
- She's going to keep searching UNTIL SHE FINDS IT

**God, in the same way is going to keep pursuing the lost.**

The Lord so loves you and this world that He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world – 1John 2:2 "He Himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins – and not only our sins but the sins of all the world."

I know it's a bit childish; but indulge me today to remind you of a movie: "**Finding Nemo**" 2003.

Nemo is a clownfish who gets lost, and his father sets out to find him.

Eventually Nemo is captured and put in a fish tank of a dentist's office

While Nemo is feeling lost and alone in that tank, he begins to think that his father has forgotten about him and that he'll never see him again.

But one day, a Pelican named Nigel lands in the window of the Dentist office and begins to tell Nemo an amazing story...he says:

"Nemo! Your father's been fighting the entire ocean looking for you!"

"My father?" Nemo asks.

"Oh, yeah! He's been battling sharks and jellyfish," Nigel recounts.

"It's my dad! He took on a shark!" proudly exclaims Nemo.

Nigel says, "I heard he took on three."

Nemo is dumbfounded. He repeats, "Three?"

Nigel explains, "You see, kid. After you were taken, your dad started swimming like a maniac. He took on three sharks. He battled an entire jellyfish forest. Now he's riding a bunch of sea turtles on the east Australian current, and the word is...he's headed this way right now to Sydney."

"What a great daddy!" Nemo says.

**There's a reason some movies resonate so deeply with us.**

**The father heart of God is imbedded in there.**

God is relentlessly chasing after what was lost – His Creation

3. **This Is What God Celebrates**      **3<sup>rd</sup> truth about God's searching**

**God's Heart:**

Luke 15:10 –

“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!

In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.”

**Question:** How often in the Bible do you see God celebrating with the angels?  
**Not often.**

**If you want to know what God celebrates as a win...as important...it's this.**

It's us fulfilling the great commission and helping lost people find forgiveness in Jesus.

**We don't see God throwing a party because:**

- You got a good education...or a great job...
- Because you're doing a fantastic job on becoming “the best you!”

But we exhaust most of our efforts in life on these types of things.

- Our whole lives seem to be centered around questions like:
  - How do I become more successful?
  - How do I get happier?

**We need to learn what God chooses to celebrate.**

**He celebrates the LOST being FOUND!**

**If that's true, that ought to be the main pursuit of our lives.**

Prov. 11:30 "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that wins souls is wise."

There's a story about a young man who was interviewing to work at a concert hall as an usher...his job would be to help people find their seat and their way around.

- The manager of the concert hall asked him, "What would you do if a fire were to break out?"
- And the young man answered, "Oh, don't worry about me. I'd get out okay."
- Unfortunately, that's how we often think of our Christian life.

**"Oh, don't worry about me. I'd be okay. I'm saved."**

You, as a Christian, are an usher. It isn't enough to run from the flames yourself!

You are responsible for helping others find their way out!

And we need to take on our Father's Heart

We need to **VALUE** people like He values people.

If we understand how valuable they are, surely we'll do something about the destruction that's coming for them.

**Value them**...they are precious to God.

He came and gave His life for them on the cross.

If we value them, we will relentlessly pursue them...like our Father in Heaven does.

We'll leave the comfort zone of our own lives to pursue and find them.

We'll sacrifice our own endeavors, our own checklists, our own schedules, our own conveniences, and we'll go searching.

We'll sweep the floor...sweep our own lives of sin and luke-warmness

And we'll keep searching...we'll keep praying...until they come to Christ

**THAT...is our mission.**

**Because THAT...is God's mission...and that's God's heart.**