

Jan 25 – Bible Story – Parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

Movie – Finding Nemo

Theme – Christ searches for you

Let's recap our series so far. The first we found Atlantis and were reminded that the wise men searched for Christ with hope, and so should we. Then we looked at our feet. The toys in Toy story found the name Andy on their feet. Though we don't, God claims us and writes his name upon our hearts. Last week we saw the parallels between Moses and the Lion King. They both tell us to "Remember who you are".

Today we turn our attention... to the wonderful 2003 movie, Finding Nemo.

It was Pixar's first film to be released in the movie theaters in the northern hemisphere summer. A sequel, Finding Dory, is in production, set to be released on June 17, 2016.

The film received widespread critical acclaim, won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, and was nominated in three more categories including Best Original Screenplay. It was the second highest-grossing film of 2003, earning a total of \$936 million worldwide. Finding Nemo was the highest-grossing G-rated film of all time before Pixar's own Toy Story 3 overtook it. In 2008, the American Film Institute named it the 10th greatest animated film ever made as part of their 10 Top 10 lists.

Who has seen it?

A clown fish named Marlin, who lives in the Great Barrier Reef, loses his son Nemo, after he ventures into the open sea, despite his father's constant warnings about many of the ocean's dangers. Nemo is abducted by a boat, netted up and sent to a dentist's office in Sydney. So, while Marlin ventures off to try to find Nemo, Marlin meets a fish named Dory, a blue tang suffering from short-term memory loss. The companions travel a great distance, encountering various dangerous sea creatures such as sharks, anglerfish and jellyfish, in order to rescue Nemo. While the two are doing this, Nemo and the other sea animals in the dentist's fish tank plot a way to return to Sydney Harbor to live their lives free again.

Now this reminds me of another story... This reminds me of a parable. The Parable of the Lost Sheep. We have already heard it from the Bible, so how does it parallel Finding Nemo? In both, they have something precious. Then one day, one is missing. So Marlin/Shepherd leave the safe and familiar home to journey and look for the lost fish/sheep. When Marlin/Shepherd finds the lost item (fish/sheep) he is overjoyed! He returns home to celebrate.

Ok... you may be saying, that's great and all, but this is a kid's movie (one that I haven't even seen), what does it have to do with me? How can I learn more about God through a fish?

Have you ever lost something? Something important? Keys? Phone? Child? Look in the newspaper and you will see quite a few stories of people who have lost something. Most have stories of losing children in store or large places. Have you have lost your child? Maybe took your eyes off him/her for

just a second and look back to an empty space? (I didn't really expect anyone to admit that.) When you lose something, especially something important, panic sets in. Then the frustration of not being able to find it. Then anger at losing in first place. Finally, concern that something must have happened to our lost item.

Oh how we search! Up and down, in and out. Heaven forbid someone come into our house when we have lost something! It looks like a tornado went through it! We would overturn anything... move anything... to find our lost item. It is that single-minded devotion that Marlin searches for his son Nemo. *[Let's look at this clip.]*

Nemo was lost. Marlin felt fear, frustration, and panic. Then there was a moment when Nemo wasn't lost anymore. Spoiler alert— it's called *Finding Nemo* not Losing Nemo. Then there was joy and celebration! Now think about what happens when you find your lost object (keys, phone, child). You found it! Oh the joy! And then the celebration—don't have to look anymore, and the item safe with you.

Sometimes we're lost. Just like Marlin searches the whole ocean, Jesus is searching for us. We are like Nemo not listening to his dad, Marlin, or times when we are like Nemo and we say mean things to him. There are times we do things God doesn't want us to do. We touch the boat or go down a road we shouldn't. We sin and run from God but, God always comes looking for us. Marlin searched a whole ocean for Nemo, but Jesus searches the whole world looking for us. We sometimes are or feel like we are lost, but God searches for us... and spoiler alert- God always finds us! The bible tells us that we can't hide from God, he will always find us.

I know that it amazes me that someone could love me enough to come running after me and rescue me, even when I do something wrong. In Romans 8:35-39 the Bible says, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I hope that it will continue to remind us that like the good father Marlin is, our good Father loves us and will come for us not matter where we are in the big blue world.

Feel lost today? No direction? Don't know what future looks like without panic, frustration, anger, confusion...

You are not lost. As we learned two weeks ago, we are claimed by God.

If you feel lost, or when you feel lost, keep looking towards being found. It is Prevenient Grace that tells us—"God is here all along...You're never alone". What was lost is now found.

This single-minded devotion of father to child is like God's love for us. He searches for us when we are lost, and He rejoices when we are found. He has sent His Son into the world to remind us of His faithfulness. In two months, we will celebrate Holy Week, when the depth of God's love for us will be remembered in all its drama, pain and triumph. May we too know that faithfulness of God, which does not let us remain lost, which searches for us even now. And in our faith, we let ourselves be found.