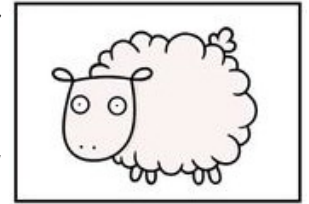


Finding Lost Things – A Father’s Search

In Luke 15, we have Jesus sharing this parable that talks about things that are lost. Beginning with verse 4, we start with the lost sheep: *“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”* You know that feeling you get when you have lost something you really need and/or love? Think of your mobile phones: how many of us have ever lost our mobile phones? And let’s just say it’s one of those days where it’s an emergency and you are supposed to be the person that people contact when the emergency happens, but you don’t know where your phone is. You are looking everywhere in the house, you are sweating, you are feeling guilty, your blood pressure is up. When you find your mobile phone under your coat or on the shelf, wherever it was, there is a great rejoicing. Right? Now think about when you lose the keys to the house. It’s raining outside, maybe there are children in the car, maybe there are groceries in the car, maybe the dog is barking, maybe you left the stove on and you can’t get in! You’re looking everywhere for the door keys and you find them in the puddle by the car where you dropped them. When you find those keys, there is a great rejoicing. In my own heart, I feel the sense of relief, but also the sense of joy, a sense of, “Now life can continue.” And those are just the smaller things. Here in Luke 15, Jesus is hanging out with these tax collectors and sinners, and He is trying to speak to their hearts in a way that will communicate to them. I love that about Jesus. He’s not trying to be a deep spiritual person, He’s just trying to reach people because He loves them. He is trying to talk to them in a way they can understand. So He shares the parable about a lost sheep, because there were a lot of shepherds in Israel! A shepherd would know and love all 100 of his sheep. Another example could be a mom who has a bunch of kids: if you have two children or ten children, you love all of them; they are all precious to you because they are all your children. And to lose just one of something that precious to you affects you immensely. Someone could say to a mother of ten if one of her children went missing, “You’ve got nine more! What’s one lost child when you’ve got nine more?! Don’t worry about it!” But the mother would be inconsolable, she loves that child. But Jesus didn’t start his parable with lost children. He started with a lost sheep. He said, “Listen, that guy may have had 100 sheep, but every single one of them meant something to his heart, and to lose just one, knowing the 99 were right there where they were meant to be, that one missing one affected the shepherd and it caused him to go out. There is an urgency that we feel when we are looking for our mobile phone or our car keys, but the shepherd felt an even greater passion as he searched and searched to find his lost sheep. It affected him so much that when that lost sheep was found, the heart of the shepherd had to throw a party, had to let everyone know. Maybe we would do a group text: “I found my lost sheep, let’s have a barbeque, let’s rejoice! I feel so much relief and joy that my sheep is found.” That is what was happening in the heart of that person.

LOST!



HAVE YOU SEEN
THIS SHEEP?

In the next part of the parable, Jesus brings up another picture of losing something. It starts in verse 8: *“What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.”* She loses one coin, and someone could say, “Isn’t the nine coins enough?” But there is a treasure involved in this. Those coins represent her treasure. Ten coins may sound like a lot of money to some. And for many people, money is their treasure. But Jesus said, wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So in a certain sense you could say, the thing this woman treasured, she



lost a part of it. She lost her treasure. And it affected her so much that she could not just go take a nap and say, "I'm tired, I lost part of my treasure but I need to take a nap, so I will sleep now and search later." Have you ever lost something so precious to you, something that was a treasure to you, and you could not sleep, you could not eat, you could not go back to work, until you searched everywhere? Something inside of us goes, "I can not just go back to life as normal, having lost my treasure. I have to stop everything and find my treasure." If it is not your treasure it would be natural to think, "Ok, I'm going to sleep, I'm going to eat, I'm going to go to work and some day I

will find that thing." But when you really treasure something, the reason you go to work is for the treasure. The reason you sleep is to have strength for the treasure. Those things serve where your heart is at. Your job is not your treasure, the family you provide for with the job is your treasure. The house you clean is not the treasure, what it houses is the treasure. Those things serve the treasure and so when that treasure is lost, those things stop. And when the treasure is found this woman calls all her friends and says, "My treasure is found!" There is joy in her heart. Sometimes I think I miss that when I search the scriptures. I just hear a teaching instead of realizing the heart issues behind the words and feeling what God must feel and really coming to know Him, because He is a Person and not a doctrine or religion. As I continued reading through those verses I realized that the story of lost things did not stop with the sheep and with the coin, but continued as Jesus kept talking to them about lost things in the parable of the prodigal son. And it is in this continuation that we see a progression. How much deeper is it to the heart of a father to lose his son than the loss of a sheep or coin? We know how it feels to lose our car keys, we may relate to misplacing our mobile phone, we might even relate to our pet running away and it breaks our heart. Some mothers and fathers may have experienced the powerful emotions of when a child is lost in the supermarket or at the playground and they can not find them and they feel a panic rising. "My child, where is my child?!" We can feel all of that, but can we really know what God felt when He lost His Son? What God the Father felt when He lost His Lamb, His Treasure, His only begotten Son? In Matthew 3:17 it says, "My beloved Son in Whom all My pleasure lies." "The Son of My love" is a translation of Colossians 1:13. He who was with Him from the beginning and daily His delight, Proverbs 8:30 says. The Son that was in the bosom of the Father, that came from the bosom of the Father, John 1:1, 18.

I had to ask myself, "Have I ever truly considered what the Father felt when He lost His Son on the cross?" And I found myself praying to the Father, telling Him that I mostly considered what I gained at the cross, rather than thinking about what He lost as a Father, a Father who loves His Son." I began to be moved upon by the reality that God the Father had only one Son. He didn't have 99 or 10 sons. He had one Son, His only begotten Son, His beloved Son, the one who was with Him from eternity past. And I think in a very real way, He lost His Son. We all know that story in Genesis, when Abraham was going to slay his son Isaac and then God provided a ram in the thicket and Abraham never had to go through with it. But God the Father went through with it. He saw His Son be crucified by wicked hands. And I had always thought, "Well, You are God, You can handle it." And I think that is true. But I also think that God has a heart and that He suffered and felt that loss of His Son. And I had never looked at the progression in the scriptures leading up to the story of the prodigal son. I had never noticed that there were two other examples of losing something before the prodigal son story where a Father lost His Son. And in noticing that I realized, "Oh my, the Father lost His beloved and only Son at Calvary."

I noticed in the first two parables, the story of the sheep and in the story with the coin, everybody searched and searched until they eventually found their treasure. Is it not true that the shepherd searched and searched until he found the sheep that was lost? And having found the sheep, came back and rejoiced with his friends. Likewise with the woman who lost the coin, did she not search and search, and finding it throw a party with her friends and rejoice?

And yet this father, representing our Heavenly Father, lost His Son. But where is it that He searches and searches, and when is it that He finds Him? When is that moment when He finds the lost Son? And what is the real reason that His joy is so great that He throws a feast? I understand that, in the parable of the prodigal son, he throws a party when the prodigal comes home... we all know the story, we are all well acquainted with that parable. But it is a parable, and that means it is just a story, not the exact interpretation. It is a story to help us understand what the real is. What is the reality behind that parable? What is the real story of God, the real Father and Jesus, His real Son who was slain on a tree and crucified and lost? Jesus said, *"My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* He said that on the cross. There was that separation that happened when Jesus died, a loss that had never happened between the Father and the Son. So Jesus on the Cross is the real lost Son. God is the real Father, losing His Son. So the question remains, "Where is the real finding of that Son? Where is the real finding of the lost Son?" And that is where the scripture in Colossians 1:27 came to my heart. It is a scripture that Paul shared with the Gentile church at Colossae and at its time it was a revolutionary scripture because many thought that the Gentiles were never meant to participate in this treasure of God's Christ, the Messiah, in a such deep personal manner. So for Paul to say this to the Gentiles was incredible. He says to them, "Christ in you is the hope of glory." Christ in you. Not taught to you, not you participating in religious traditions, but the Christ of God, His own Son, living in you is the hope of glory. Then the thought came to me, "Whose hope is it?!" Yes it is the Gentiles' hope, yes it is my hope, but it is not my hope of glory, it is not the Gentiles' glory, it is the glory of God that we are going for. We are wanting God to be glorified, not me or the Gentiles, but God! It is the hope of the Father's glory. Christ is another name for His Son. The Son in us is the Father's hope of being glorified. It is the Son who always glorifies the Father, *"Father I have glorified Thee, Thou hast glorified Me"* (John 17:4-5). The Son always glorifies the Father; therefore Christ in us is the hope of the Father being glorified. The Father finds the Son He lost on the cross inside of you and me, inside of us. He finds the Jesus that He sowed on Calvary, like a seed in the ground, into that death, hoping to get a harvest of many sons filled with THE SON. It is Christ in you, Christ in me, Christ in us. So the Father lost Him in that death, but He knew that eventually one day, people would let that Son come into their hearts and live. The Father would then find Jesus, His Son, in everybody who let Jesus live in their heart, and that would be such an amazing thing.

We can begin to feel the true weight of the issues behind this parable in regards to God's heart when we think of it from the Father's view. In the parable of the prodigal son we find a bereaved yet desperately hopeful father who lost his son and could not find him. And then all of a sudden, way off in the distance that father sees his son,... and his heart LEAPS and he begins to RUN and smothers that lost one with EMBRACES and KISSES. Now, let us turn from the parable to the real. God the Father, the Father who sowed His Son at Calvary so that He might find Him in us, has been watching for a long time from a long ways off. He has been hoping for that glory, that Son, that One Who was with Him from the beginning to be now found in us. And from a long ways off the Father spots that same Son that He has always loved and known coming in His direction! He goes, "Could that be the Son I lost on the cross! That's My Son in that person and they're coming back to the Father, they're coming back into that relationship that My Son always had with Me!" They're coming to the Father through the Son.

In the parable of the prodigal son, that son first came to his father in a spirit of self seeking and gain, *"Father give ME all that pertains to ME"* (Luke 15:12). Even though that person had been born of that father into his family, he was prodigal from the spirit of that family. When the father looked into his child at that time all he saw was selfish desire for personal gain. Yet when the prodigal returned home the father identified something different, a change in his heart and desire.



In the truest sense, our Father sees in His returning prodigals those who are hungry, open and ready to begin relating to Him through His crucified Son. Before the prodigal's return the father saw a member of his family who wanted to enjoy a life far away from away from his father, yet a new heart was emerging within him on the return home. In truth, it is a picture of the spirit of the Son awakening and coming to life within a believer. Jesus, the true Son, said it this way... *"I and my Father are one... wherever I am He is there"* (John 10:30,16:32). It is the Son within us desiring to be with the Father. To be where His Father is at. To eat what His Father eats. To fellowship in One. The Son is our Life so that our fellowship may now be truly be with the Father and with His Son (I John 1:3).

Yes, the Father lost His Son on the Cross when Christ was slain. But consider this, would it also be possible for the Father to lose the savor and living communion of His Son in us when we ***do not allow Christ to be our life***? Is it possible for born again believers to live "in a far country" from the Father's heart simply because they choose to live for self instead of through the Son? In the story of the prodigal we do not find a picture of the fully formed Christ within a believer (Galatians 4:19). Instead, we see a picture of a one who is already born again into the family but in the hog pen of living for self turning back to the Father and His desire for His Son in us. Despite the hog-pen and distance, a true and deep hunger begins to arise in this family member. That hunger for a real relationship with the Father begins to draw out the heart of that person. Indeed, it is a hunger for the SON to be revealed in us (Galatians 1:16). In this parable we find that even at this early stage of hunger and returning the HEART OF THE FATHER LEAPS FOR JOY and runs out to this one. ***This is how much the Father desires His Son to be our LIFE!***

The Father's eyes are laser sharp in their search to find His Son in us. His heart is so set upon His Beloved Son that He will see even the slightest movement of openness towards His Son being formed in us from a far way off. He will get up and RUN... He will begin to embrace us into that eternal fellowship between the Father and the Son. He will begin to separate us from our mother's womb and by His grace reveal His Son in us (Galatians 1:15)! He will take us into the eternal feast of the slaughtered Lamb and feed us "GOD FOOD"... the divine nature of selfless giving, the Eternal Spirit of Sacrifice (Luke 15:23). He will cloth us in Christ and bring us into the true spirit of the family by sending forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6)).

How wonderful would it be that we could bring back to the Father the Son He lost? How wonderful to comfort Him, to bring Him joy, after all He's given for us? He gave His own Son. I think the verses in this parable share it beautifully. Luke 15:24, "For this My Son was dead and is alive again; this My Son was lost and is found." Jesus gave His life unto death on the cross, but the Father waits to see that Son living in us now. Jesus, God's Son, was planted in us at new birth but can be lost in the midst of our flesh living for self. Christ in us is the hope of glory, ... the Father's hope of being glorified through His Son living in us. And I believe the heart of the Father does long for His Son in us.

Lord, we just thank You for sending Your Son, Your only Son, the Son that You love. Thank You for losing Him, losing Him even unto the death of the cross. Thank You for going through the things that You went through so that You could find Jesus in us today, so that You could rejoice over that Son being within us. And the great fellowship and the great feast and the joy and the songs and the rejoicing that comes to You and to all of us as we allow that Son to live. Father, we thank You that each day is a new day to bring you Jesus Your Son, to bless Your heart, to say thank You in a hundred different ways by simply allowing Him to live through us. Father, we want to say thank You, thank You for Your great love, thank You for sending Your Son, thank You for the cross and thank You for Christ in each one of us. And we pray this in Jesus', Your Son's, name. Amen.

