



Lost!

Pastor John Klawiter

September 11, 2022

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Luke 15:1-10

Grace and peace to you my siblings in Christ,

I can't tell you how many HOURS are spent in my house looking for the remote. Often, it gets blamed on someone... only to be found later in the place one of the kids neglected to check. I've been away all weekend and sure enough, the basement remote is gone.

But the upstairs remote? It was missing a whole week. Before Labor Day. It's back!!!! Rejoice!!! Just in time for football season.

Lost and found.

What a beautiful Biblical theme. We sang it earlier: I was lost, but now I'm found... was blind but now I see.

Can you be lost, and not even know it?

You bet you can! Sometimes, like I shared at the beginning of worship, we are so preoccupied with success and being busy, we are ineffective. We lose our ability to see what's right in front of us.

Here's a story told by a gentleman about a stranger who was completely blind to what was right in front of him.

VIDEO about Queen

Pull out phone

Can you imagine the man in this story when he gets home? He's so excited to tell his stories.

"Hey, neighbor... I went to England and went to a place where the Queen often visited and I talked to someone who actually met her!

Check out this picture! See, he was so friendly and cordial. And look, he was traveling with this woman who took our picture."

Can you imagine that neighbor getting to break the news?! She was RIGHT THERE!



I think these parables that Jesus tells about being lost and found are very similar. There's a sense that we are in control.

That we are the ones who are looking. The tourist was not picking up the signs—wasn't looking in the right places.

Do Christians ever ask, **“Have you found Jesus?”** (SLIDE of cartoon) You bet they do.

Jesus isn't lost (**he's right there!**)

The question is innocent... but maybe, Biblically speaking, it should be “Are you lost? If so, have you turned to Jesus?”

Jesus isn't in hiding. Jesus isn't trying to avoid us. We are the ones who put Jesus in the corner. Or off to the side.

These stories from Luke's gospel are familiar.

The lost sheep. The lost coin. The next verses tell about a prodigal son.

They are relatable. We know how it feels to lose something important or valuable.

What happens when we fill those holes with items that aren't God-filled?

We experience greed. Selfishness. Loneliness or isolation. We can slip into a feeling of being lost rather easily. We blame and point fingers. We convince ourselves that the only way out is to pull ourselves up and figure it out.

That's not Biblical.

That's when we get lost.

But here's the interesting thing... the sheep and the coin don't know they're lost. They haven't “sinned” per se, so when it comes to repentance, it's not as if they've changed.

Jesus is telling us about God's behavior when the lost is found. Not about our behavior. God rejoices at the found sheep.

God rejoices at the coin that's found. God rejoices when his son who left has returned.

In fact, God throws a party each time. God invites his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him! It's extravagant. Way over the top. This is how God behaves—Jesus tells us!

The most important reminder for me from the parables today is that I'm not the gatekeeper. Neither are you! I'm not the one says whether you're in or out.



I'm not gonna tell you that you're not worthy. I'm not gonna deny you the grace of God. The mercy, forgiveness, and the peace that comes from turning to Jesus in your life.

Too often, the church bears the label of judge and jury.

I've had plenty of conversations, many of them with soldiers, many with peers who are disillusioned by the church. They'll say "I believe in God, **but the church excluded me** (first cartoon). I don't have any need for it.

I get it.

It hurts. It hurts to be the lost sheep—whether we've strayed from God on our own or had a little help being kicked to the curb (**second cartoon**).

It is devastating to feel unwelcomed. Or worse, told you're welcome... **as long as you fit in.**

It's hard. I try to be aware of this, but know that I have missteps and make mistakes. I'm constantly learning.

Cartoonist David Hayward uses art as a medium to challenge us. His illustrations draw out situations we are ashamed to admit about ourselves. I am challenged.

Too often, I hope for comfort and peace. Too often, I don't speak up when a brother or a sister is lost, not part of the fold.

99 is an incomplete number. 100 is. 9 is an incomplete number. 10 is an example of wholeness.

Lost and found? Finding wholeness is a challenge. It means that I have to trust that God is filling in those cracks that I'm too afraid to let you see. Too afraid those holes will spring open and I will be vulnerable.

When we're lost, like the sheep, the coin, and the son... we just want to be safe again. We want to be saved.

The national anthem in England is... well, was: "**God Save the Queen**"

It's not an ask. It's not a hope. It's not a question. Will God save the Queen???

No, it's not that... It's a statement.

Did God Save the Queen?

Just because I have a different theology and might not have always agreed with the Queen, it doesn't mean she's lost. We can be different with each other and still know



that we are undoubtedly found. Yes, Jesus died and rose again for the Queen. She's saved.

Claudia? She wasn't lost—I can promise you that... what a beloved woman of Faith.

Did God save you? Did God save those sheep that feel excluded... feel unwelcome... feel hurt?

You bet. Jesus died and rose again... for you and me.

When we're lost, Jesus is there. But we have a voice. We can help others into the fold. We can encourage a friend or a neighbor to join us—are you feeling lost, Jesus is here!!!

Can we be a sanctuary that provides ACTUAL sanctuary for all our brothers and sisters?

What can we do to get over our own insecurities and desires to remain comfortable and truly act like our savior... to love, unconditionally?

Sometimes, when we're lost... what we're looking for is right in front of us. It's been there the whole time. Jesus has been here, the whole time.

Rejoice, we have been found! ...like a remote in the Klawiter house... over, and over, and over, and over... again. Amen.