

“Seek out those who are lost” Luke 15:1-10 Trinity 3 2021

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In our text for today we have two parables. A parable is a symbolic story. People in the story represent something.

The first parable is of a lost sheep. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" At that time, a shepherd normally had 30 or 40 sheep. This shepherd had 100 sheep. He lost only one and left the rest in the pasture to find it.

Who is the shepherd in this parable? Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd and we are His sheep, for whom Christ died. The lost sheep is a sinner who has not repented, has not recognized his sins, so he is lost in the desert. In this case, the Good Shepherd does not say, "A sheep is lost. Not my problem. These things happen. I leave you to die in the wilderness." No, He will look for it. "And having found it, he lays it on his shoulders; and coming home gathers together his friends and neighbors, saying to them. Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost."

The second parable touches the same topic. "Or what woman having ten drachmas, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?" A drachma was a coin of that time. The woman closed the door and moved all the furniture to look for one.

"And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Who are the friends of the pastor in the first parable and the woman in the second? The angels in heaven. "So I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

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Our text says that some people mocked and maligned Jesus because he ate with those that had a bad reputation. However, Jesus' purpose was not to share in the lifestyle of sinners, but to bring them the gospel of God. He wanted to gather the lost sheep and bring them back to the flock of God.

All of us are in the same state, whether we have a good reputation or a bad reputation. We must acknowledge and repent of our sins to receive God's forgiveness. Our Lord wants to look for the lost sheep, the sinners who have not repented. The Lord does not say the lost sheep are not His problem. He does not want anyone to suffer eternal death.

God does not want the damnation or destruction of any human being. Today many people are concerned with the death of all living beings by a collision with a meteor or comet, or climate change. As believers we trust that God does not want our destruction and will protect us until the second coming of Christ in glory. Our planet is in the hands of God.

Also God does not want eternal death of anyone, but the restoration of a good relationship between Himself and each of us to live with Him forever.

Between the Ascension of our Lord and His second coming is the time for us to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations, as the Lord has commanded us. Until the day the Lord has ordained, the world is under the protection of God.

Some people may say that after 2,000 years, all nations have had the opportunity to hear the Word of God, but that is not the truth. There are still many parts of the world where we find people who have not heard of Jesus. In addition, there are many people who have heard the name of Jesus, but do not know the real Jesus. They have a distorted

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image of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the church still has the task of proclaiming the gospel to all nations until the Lord returns in glory.

The proclamation of the Word of God includes not only the good news that God loves us, also the law of God. What do we learn in the catechism class? What is the Law of God? The 10 commandments are the Law, God's will for everyone to live as His children. But no one can fulfill this law perfectly, so the law does not save us.

The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God, beginning with "You shall have no other gods before me." The other seven commandments deal with our relationships with our neighbors, beginning with "Honor your father and your mother."

We are sinners. Our heritage from Adam and Eve is a rebellious will. So we are far from God. By right we deserve God's condemnation. But God does not want our condemnation. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place.

So every Sunday we confess we have sinned against God in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone. We have not loved Him wholeheartedly. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

Because if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Only the sacrifice of Christ on the cross made God's forgiveness possible for us. The mission of the church is to proclaim the Law first to call to repentance the lost sheep. We are not to say we are better than them, nor to say we are holier than them. We want them to recognize their sins, repent of their sins and live with Christ forever.

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Like the Good Shepherd, we always are looking for the lost sheep. Some of our flock here are not with us now. We are always looking to reclaim them and restore them to a good relationship with the Lord.

Each person is important in the eyes of God. Those who have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ, also those who have heard, but stray from the right path.

The promise of forgiveness applies to each of us. When we fall into sin, we can repent of our evil lives. In this life, there is always the opportunity for repentance.

Not to proclaim the Word of God is to leave the sheep lost in the desert. We proclaim law and gospel not to condemn anyone but to save them.

Thank God that His love has no limits. Let's get together to receive God's forgiveness to continue to live as His children. Herein is the hope and peace that passes all understanding. Amen.