Overview

Lost and Found. Schools, businesses, and churches all usually have a designated area called “Lost and Found.” People lose things all the time. They lose phones, keys, coats, and basically anything else that they have the ability to sit down somewhere. Nobody intentionally tries to lose something. Normally when something is lost it causes a lot of stress and frustration over the lost item. In Luke 15 Jesus tells three parables dealing with lost items. The first story deals with a shepherd who loses just one sheep out of his herd of 100. So only 1% of his herd was missing and he still left the other 99 and went to look for the one that was lost. The next story is about ten silver coins. The woman who owns the coins loses just one coin in her house. She cleans the entire house until that single coin is found. The last parable is one of the most well-known parables of Jesus. It is the parable of the prodigal son. In this story the younger son takes his part of the inheritance and spends it all in a foreign land. There are several similarities and differences between these parables. There is a progression from 1 out of 100 to 1 out of 10 to 1 out of 2. At the end of all three there is a celebration over the return of the lost item. We need to remember that when you read these parables that Jesus is surrounded by the tax collectors and sinners and is being watched by the religious leaders. A lot of times within the Christian faith we tend to stress sinners repentant and receiving God’s grace, but we don’t consider as much the search for the lost. We serve a God that doesn’t just have a come and experience mentality, but he actively pursues those who don’t know Him. The Pharisees listening to Jesus were very content with where they were in their relationship with God and saw no need to pursue the lost. All Christians not only have the responsibility but the privilege of seeking the lost whether it is friends, co-workers, or family.

Bible Study: Luke 15:1-32

1. Discuss as a group who would represent the sinners and tax collectors in our society today. Are there groups of people that society marginalizes and doesn’t see the need to reach out to (maybe people with AIDS, prostitutes, homeless, or alternative lifestyles). Is there a group you could get to know in order to share God’s story?

2. Read Luke 15:1-7. Why do you think the shepherd wasn’t content with just having 99 of his sheep safe? Was it really worth leaving the majority to go search for the one? What does this say about God’s desire for the lost?

3. God is committed to pursuing the lost. How do believers obtain this same determination for the lost? How can Christians fight the mentality of it being good enough for having the lost seek God?

4. Luke 15:7 gives us a glimpse into the priorities of heaven. What are some barriers that keep believers from having an attitude of evangelism?

5. Read Luke 15:8-10. Discuss as a group what you understand to be the emphasis in these two parables. Is it the lost being found or the great amount of effort that was put into searching for the lost?

6. Read Luke 15:11-32. Is someone in the group willing to discuss a time in which they were running from God? What made them come to their senses and return?
7. The elder son represented the Pharisees. They felt no joy over a restored relationship with God. They were more concerned with their own relationship and doing everything right themselves. How can believers today guard themselves against this attitude happening to them?

8. The elder son’s inheritance was not in jeopardy (the estate had already been divided). Why is it so important to remember that no matter how long we have been a believer that we all fall under the same Grace of God as someone who just turned to faith?