

Luke 15:1-10 (CEB)

All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to him. The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcome sinners and eats with them."

Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn't he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost sheep.' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.

"Or what woman, if she owns ten silver coins and loses one of them, won't light a lamp and sweep the house, searching her home carefully until she finds it? When she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Celebrate with me because I've found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, joy breaks out in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who changes both heart and life."

Week of September 4

Listen: Read Luke 15:1-10

When we walk with Jesus it changes how we look at ourselves, others, and God. It changes how we look at, well, everything! This month we will read a passage from Luke's Gospel where Jesus tells two stories of lost things.

This passage begins with people who are upset with Jesus. The main complaint against Jesus was who he chose to eat with. Some people didn't understand why Jesus was spending time with and eating with other people; people whose lives they didn't like and thought beneath people like them and Jesus. Jesus tells stories to help people, including us, understand that he is for all people.

These familiar stories are from a long time ago, but they help us see how Jesus asks us to look at others.

Talk:

-If you get invited somewhere or to do something what is usually the first question you ask? "Who's going to be there?" When the response is people you don't know or don't necessarily like how do you respond?

-Have you ever changed your mind about someone? What helped you to do that?

-Has someone ever changed their mind about you? How did it feel?

Holy God, we trust that you love all your children equally, but sometimes it is hard to do so. Help us remember and show that love this week. Amen

Go:

This week we are going to work on remembering that Jesus told his stories because of who he ate with; that act upset people. It matters who *we* eat with. As we are near the beginning of a school year let's experiment with sitting by someone different that we wouldn't normally sit with at lunch. Ask questions, listen to their lives, what they like, how they feel, what they hope for a new year, and share your story, too! When you are together as a family share the stories and people you have met and remember them in your prayers.

Week of September 11

Listen: Read Luke 15:1-10

Jesus tells parables to teach a new way to look at things. Parables are stories about something that are about something else. Jesus starts his story asking us to imagine being responsible for 100 sheep and losing one. I can't imagine what it must have been like to be a shepherd in Jesus' time. The elements of weather and predatory animals, having to oversee 100 sheep is a huge responsibility! If we lost one, we might be tempted to think, "Well, we still have 99." I've heard sheep don't always make the best choices; what if this lost sheep wandered off, or got stuck somewhere it wasn't supposed to go? But Jesus does not tell it that way. Jesus asks, "Wouldn't you leave the other 99 to find this one?"

Not only does the shepherd leave the 99 he's so happy to find the one he throws a party! Jesus says this is how heaven celebrates when one changes their heart and life.

Talk:

-Have you ever lost and found something valuable to you? How did it make you feel to lose it? How did it make you feel to find it?

-Change the word "lost" to "precious" does it change how you read and think about the lost sheep in this story?

-How does it make you feel to picture God's kingdom as a party for people who are found?

Dear God, thank you for seeing me as someone precious enough to search for. Help me remember that this week and share it with others, Amen.

Go:

This week as you encounter people who are hurt, are having a bad day, getting in trouble or being unkind, respond to them with kindness. Think of this person as a "precious" one who Jesus is inviting with you to the party. Look for ways to be especially kind to people this week.

Week of September 18

Listen: Read Luke 15:1-10

The second part of Jesus's parable is about a woman who has ten silver coins and loses one. She still has nine, but she lights a lamp and scours her house looking for the lost coin. Like the shepherd from the other story, she's so happy when she finds it, she throws a party, inviting her neighbors. Jesus tells us this is how the angels respond when a sinner changes heart and life: with a party.

The word "lost" can also be understood as "precious," or "valuable." When we think about people who don't know or don't live like they know they are God's children let's think of them not simply as "lost," but as "precious" and "beloved" worth leaving the obedient sheep for and tearing up the house to find.

Talk:

- Have you ever lost your direction, forgotten where you were? How does it feel to be found?
- When have you seen someone's life that has changed for the better, how did they respond? How did those around them respond?
- Has God helped you to remind someone they are precious to God?

Dear God, we trust that you have come to us, searched for us, and want us to know we are your children. Help us remember this week we aren't your only children and give us grace to share, Amen.

Go:

This week borrow a bowl, cut some slips of paper and have a pen to place beside the bowl. As you hear or meet people who need a reminder that they are beloved and precious to God, write down their names. This week if you hear something on the news about refugees, or war, people who are hurting, or even, people who are celebrating, write them down and put them in the prayer bowl. Each day, empty the bowl and remember these with God as you pray.

Week of September 25

Listen: Read Luke 15:1-10

Jesus' parables are stories for us! He told these two about a lost sheep and a lost coin because religious leaders were grumbling because of who Jesus ate with. These parables are for the religious people who do not understand that God is for all people. These parables are for precious people who feel "lost," and don't understand or haven't experienced how far God goes to find them. And these parables are for anybody in between the religious leader and the lost folks...a reminder that Jesus is forever challenging and helping us to see everyone as beloved by God...even us!

Talk:

- Who is someone that you have a hard time showing love?
- Does it change how you feel about them when you think of them as "precious" to God?
- What is a way you can remind yourself and them you are God's beloved child?

Dear God, help us this week have eyes that: see all of people as yours, are sensitive to those who need to hear it, and are thankful for your grace and mercy, Amen.

Go:

This week look at the food you have in your home. Is there something you can share? Find a church or a ministry that serves people. Share what God has blessed you with so that others might be blessed, too. Read through Luke and see how many times Jesus is at a meal with someone, especially, someone who was looked down upon.

Written by Rev. Drew Phillips who serves as Minister to Families at Third Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO. He lives in downtown St. Louis with his wife, Dani, son, Julius, and cat, Addie Mae.

