

The GCF 39th Anniversary Message

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Luke 15:1-7

As we celebrate 39 years of God's grace, have you ever asked yourself why God has been so gracious to our church? It cannot be that He just wants to bless us for our sakes; that may be true because of His loving nature, but that's not all of it. God gave us grace not just to enjoy it, but to give it away. And the best way to give grace away is to care about others, like we were cared for by others. When we were lost, somebody helped us to be found. It's our turn now.

Taking the cue from the life and words of the Lord Jesus, what does God want us to be individually (and therefore collectively, as a church)? God wants you to be:

1. A PERSON WHO ATTRACTS THE RIGHT KIND OF PEOPLE

v. 1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.

2. A PERSON WHO ACCEPTS THE RIGHT KIND OF PEOPLE

v. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

There are many kinds of lost people. Lost people are those who have wandered away on their own and need to be rescued. These are the people who figure in the Master's math. For Him, one of them is greater than ninety-nine.

The primary application of the term "lost" is for those without Christ, who have never asked Him to forgive them and to become personal Savior and Lord. The Shepherd gave His life to save them. But there are other kinds of "lost" sheep too.

- Those in our midst who are doubting or stopped believing the Bible we believe in.
- Those who are lonely in the crowd for one reason or the other.
- Those no longer in our midst.

3. A PERSON WHO LONGS FOR THE LOST

vv. 3-4 Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country...

4. A PERSON WHO LOOKS FOR THE LOST

v. 4 ... and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

5. A PERSON WHO LAUDS THE RETURN OF THE LOST

vv. 5-6 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

Final Thoughts:

v. 7 "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent".

Why is God like this? For those who don't think they need God, God gives them what they want – anything else other than Himself. But for those who admit they are lost, who respond to the Master's voice as He calls for them, with a repentant heart – these are the people who cause a "party" in heaven when they are found.

If you're wondering if you're lost, you probably are, and now is the time to return to the Lord. But if you've been found, it's your turn to seek the lost. Just remember this: for the lost people you know, you are the most accountable person to seek them out, no one else.