

LOST AND FOUND: WAS LIND NOW I SEE (LUKE 15:1-3; 11-32)

There are times when lose our minds. There are times when we make bad decisions. There are times when we make bad choices. When such a thing happens, we blame ourselves more than we blame others because we made the decision ourselves. In the end we cannot justify what we have done or why we did it.

We have a God of second of second chances or even third and fourth chances. We have a God who forgives a repentant sinner that seeks mercy and forgiveness. For our God is slow to anger and abundant in love. God forgives and forgives.

The Gospel of Luke is the only Gospel that represents the three parables on the theme, "Lost and Found." *The key to all the three parables is that "The Son of Man came to seek what is lost."* In order to understand the entire theme of "Lost and Found," the Gospel of Luke, we must meditate on the first two parables first: "the lost coin" and "the lost sheep." These two parables lay a good background in introducing the 3rd parable commonly known as "The Prodigal Son."

The parable of "the lost coin comes first. The coin is lost in the house, not outside of it. It is not lost of its own choice or action, but because of the accidental negligence or inaction by the lady of the house. A coin is a piece of metal. A coin has no brain of its own. A baby born in a home of drug addicted parents may be compared to a lost coin. That baby bears a family name; he is a son or daughter to the parents he did not choose to be born to. Like a coin, the baby has value and worthiness but has no choice of his/her own except the mercy of others who might sweep the house and find that baby by chance.

The 2nd is the "Parable of the lost sheep" an animal. It has an animal sheepish instinct. Instinctively, the animal wanders to seek pasture. Unlike a coin the sheep is lost away from home where there is no protection because it can't reason or think of the dangers of being made prey out there that could make it dinner or lunch at least if the owner does not decide to seek and find the lost sheep and bring it home for wool, meat or money when sold.

The prodigal son on the other hand, is not a coin or an animal. He is a human being created in the image of God. He has eyes to see, ears to hear, and a brain to think and discern thing. He has the freewill to choose the path he wants to take on his own.

The lost son is not given a name but simply an adjective that qualifies him as lost or prodigal. He represents you and me in our disobedience. He is you and me when we choose to misuse our God given freewill. This son decides out of freewill to go to a "*distant country*," which in this parable, stands for a life of sin and selfishness in its deepest sense. It is a separation from God's love, fellowship with God, and God's authority. Any human separation from God is called an act of disobedience, and therefore sin. A sinner knows God but decides to backslide as he/she pursues worldly pleasures where he/she wastes his physical, intellectual and spiritual gifts given by God since God

gives each one of us gifts that help us to live a decent life. The text calls these gifts “inheritance.” The outcome is clear. We become disillusioned, lacking true joy that can only be found when living in right relationship with God.

Unless a person comes to a real turning point in life he or she will face God’s security systems. We may not see God’s security systems in place but they are always there. In this scripture, one of them is identified as a “*Great famine.*”

The prodigal son made a pig or a hog of himself and ate swine feed because he had squandered all he had in loose or immoral life. God put him in the corner where he had no escape. Parents could not rescue him; siblings could not seek him; friends could not help him. He was left he was in a fix with two options to choose from: ether to come back to his senses or to commit suicide.

Scripture says, “*When he came to his senses,*” meaning, he chose right from wrong. His sense of entitlement was gone. His obstinacy was gone. His self-centeredness was gone. His stubbornness was gone. He found himself caught in the thicket of the security systems that God had put in place. When God leads us to a place of repentance we must come to our senses.

Shall we now come to our senses? We are not a coin, which is just a piece metal. We are not sheep or a beast lost because of its desire to eat without being cautious of predators. We have the ability to discern right from wrong!

Friends, be transformed, head first. Be transformed, mind first. Be transformed conscience. Be transformed heart first. Gather up whatever is left, do not scatter. Save time do not squander opportunities when they are opportunities.

We may be captains of our freewill, but God whose is the sole Controller of our lives also holds the title.

Before any lost sinner can be found, he or she must come a reckoning of their slavery to sin. He or must come to one’s senses. He or she must come back to God. Discernment brings a person to contrition. Contrition leads a person to humble confession of the sin committed. We confess because we are not coins (non-living thing), or a brainless, conscienceless sheep (an animal). We confess because we have come to our senses as people created in the image God.

Guess what? God has compassion for any lost sinner who sorrowfully confesses his or her sins. God’s love for every sinner that repents is immeasurable. God is more than willing to forgive, to love and to restore. He never ceases to restore those sinners to full right as children of God. The benefits of Christ’s death and God’s rich grace are made available to every sinner that seeks God.

Returning to God the Father brings true restoration to a life here on earth and thereafter. God is overjoyed even as to say, “*This child of mine was lost and now is found, he was*

dead and now is alive.” He will make a feast for us. He will dress every repentant sinner with a robe of righteousness and his glory. Amen.