



BEHOLDING ADVENT

Reflections to Draw Closer to Christ
as He Comes Closer to Us



Luke 15 | Finding the Lost

WRITTEN BY THERESA BOEDEKER

Look harder," my daughter said. "Don't look at the camera. Put your head in the dryer and really look for the coin."

I stuck my head in the metal drum.

"Are you looking?"

"Yes."

"Okay, next picture."

She was making a picture book of the lost coin for her Comparative Religion class. I was the woman searching every corner of her house for that lost coin (Luke 15:8). She was the director and photographer.

There were pictures of me looking under beds, between books, under tables, and in kitchen cupboards. Looking frantic. Worried. And hurried. Then a picture of me holding the coin. Exuberant. Joyful.

The last picture was of us celebrating. It is easy to criticize, judge, and begrudge. The religious leaders were doing this to Jesus for associating with dishonest tax collectors and notorious sinners, people they avoided. They grumbled, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2 NIV).

These leaders were concerned with appearances and staying separate. Jesus was motivated by love and getting to know, serve, and save the lost. To address their concerns, Jesus tells three stories that involve a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a son returning home. Finding the lost involves looking and searching.

Jesus was not seeking the lost at the temple or at the homes of the rich. He wasn't associating with those who had it all together. He was gathering with the common everyday people who "were all gathering around to hear Jesus" (Luke 15:1). All were welcome.

His stories reveal His heart. Demonstrate His great love for us. Remind us of His purpose here on earth. He does the hard work of searching. (He doesn't wait for us to find Him). He is forgiving and welcoming. He tells the Good News to others. And He throws the party. He gives above and beyond what we deserve.

While the religious leaders expressed their disdain for the company Jesus was keeping, Jesus was right where He needed to be. He was searching for the lost in the every-day crowds of the unworthy. He is still searching for the lost. And He is still rejoicing when sinners repent, when a sinner is found, when those who wander away return.

Let's remember this as we prepare for His birth. While we search for the perfect Christmas card. The elusive ornament. The right recipe. The hidden present. The perfect gift. And our joy and peace. Jesus came to search for and find the lost (Luke 19:10).

And when He does, He doesn't criticize them for wandering away, chastise them for the wasted hours spent doing their own thing, or review all that they did wrong. He celebrates their being found, hosting a heavenly party to celebrate their homecoming.

"There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10). Christmas reminds us that Jesus came to ultimately find and redeem us. And when we repent or return to Jesus after wandering off, He throws a party to celebrate us joining or returning to His family.

REFLECTION

In what ways am I lost and needing to be found?
How can I celebrate with those who are found?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, We celebrate the fact that You actively search for and welcome the lost and those of us who wander away, rejoicing when we repent. You are always running towards us, desiring to have a relationship with us. May we welcome You into our daily lives, spend time with You, and point others to You. Help us to remember that You are always there for us, welcoming us back into Your embrace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A formerly lost sinner, continually redeemed, she delights in grace and God's love. Theresa is the designated finder of the family's misplaced items: shoes, keys, etc. She enjoys being outside, spending time with family and friends, reading, and telling funny stories. She is passionate about encouraging people to remember God's truth about themselves, life, and grace. She blogs at TheresaBoedeker.com where she unwraps life with words.