

May 19th – 25th, 2019

A Prayer



Lord, open our eyes and our hearts to a fresh and deepened understanding of just how much you value your people. Your treasure. Your cherished possession. Invigorate our spirit to be with you in your yearning for more of these precious image bearers and objects of your affection to know the never ending and unbreakable love you have for them.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 15 in the Gospel of Luke is one of the most beautiful, moving chapters in the entire Story of God. The chapter begins with the setting of tax collectors and sinners gathering around to hear Jesus. In the background, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law complain to one another that Jesus is welcoming sinners and even eats with them! Did you ever notice that one of Jesus primary ways of confronting others is through telling stories? Jesus uses stories to cut to the heart of his audience and hopefully bring about paradigm shifting change. Instead of trying to unpack each story Jesus tells, the best way to understand them is to simply read them over and over again. What if this week you saturated your days with these stories experiencing the reckless abandon love of God for the lost?

LISTEN

Now read the story of the lost sheep as paraphrased below. If you have a child or a pet insert their name in the blanks. If you don't have either of those, insert the name of a person you care deeply about. This could be your spouse, family member, a niece or nephew or a child in your MC.

Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose you lose _____. Don't you leave the others and go after _____ until you find him/her? 5 And when you find _____, you joyfully hold them tightly and carry them home. You call your friends and neighbors together. You say, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found _____.’ 7 This is how the Lord feels about those who are not yet inside His fold.

IMAGINE & FEEL

When I was 10, my family got not one, but two Springer Spaniel puppies with more energy than all the toddlers in Missio combined. What a handful! They spent most of their time outside in our large yard, chasing birds, wrestling playfully with one another. Then a phoenix monsoon struck. In their panic, they threw themselves against the wooden gate repeatedly. The gate flung open, and the puppies tumbled into the street. Before they - or we - know it, they shot to the end of our street, around the corner and out of sight.



“They’ve run off, like sinners,” we think, “so we shouldn’t associate with them any more. They’ve touched who knows what in the streets! They are unclean and unfit for our home.” We turn our backs on the puppies, shut the gate and return to whatever we were doing when the gate broke open.

Of course not! We frantically sprint after them, desperate to bring them back before they get too far and we can’t reach them anymore!

A suburban mother of a newborn snatches a precious grouping of minutes to get to the gym. While on the treadmill, her fingers swell in the heat, causing her wedding ring to be unbearably tight around her finger. She works the ring off her finger and sets it carefully next to her phone on the treadmill console.

Then the phone rings. It’s her husband. The baby is inconsolable. Distracted by the baby’s cries she hears in the background and her husband’s likely mounting misery, she leaves quickly, while still holding the phone to her ear and offering suggestions that might calm the baby.

It’s not until later that week that her empty finger catches her eye and she notices there’s no ring where the cherished, once-in-a-lifetime gift from the love of her life should be safely resting! Her heart pounds and her stomach falls. Panic rises. A sickening ache settles in her stomach. How could she be so thoughtless? Desperate and frantic, she searches every corner of her home. Where is it? What will I do if I can’t find it? That isn’t an option. I MUST find it...

Imagine the relief that washes over her when she calls the gym and discovers someone has turned in a wedding ring matching the description of hers. She laughs out loud, almost knocking over the baby swing as she half-skips, half-dances around her living room!

EMBODY / TABLE TALK

How do these stories intersect with the way you think the Lord feels about you?

What new ways can you think about how he feels about you? About your family? About your MC? About people you know? About the lost?

Who is the Holy Spirit leading you (yourself, your family, your MC) to search out and pursue, as the Good Shepherd searched you out and pursued you?

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