

WHAT IF'S OF EVANGELISM #11

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How many times have you heard the parables of the “Lost Sheep,” “Lost Coin” and “Lost Son” from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15? If you haven’t read Luke 15 or if it has been a while since you have read it last I would encourage you to take a few minutes and (re)read it.

One of the things that strikes me every time I read this chapter or even hear someone speak about it is that we see the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son as just that - “lost”. And as a result, the other 99 sheep, 9 coins and other son - “found.” In our English language I think we have somehow lost the part of the original intent and I think as a result it doesn’t quite capture the full effect of the passage.

What if instead of looking at the sheep, coin, and the son as just ‘lost’ we also used the word and recapture the idea of “treasured?” The shepherd, the women, and the father all treasured the lost, no more or less than the found. Because of the great value they placed on the treasured the shepherd leaves the 99 sheep, the women looks diligently for the coin, and the father waits patiently and intently for his son.

Have you also noticed that in each of these parables, that Jesus gives to explain God’s love for the lost, that the one who finds the “treasured/lost” rejoices. And they rejoice not just by themselves, but they call others to rejoice in the finding and returning of the lost and treasured. That is an awesome picture of the heart of God - when you and I were lost we were treasured and when we were found, our finding was celebrated.

What if we had or reflected that heart of God? What if we looked at those who don’t know Jesus as not only lost but also as treasured and loved? What if when we looked at the news or see people who are seemingly incredibly far from God through the eyes of God, as someone that is not just lost but also treasured?

We are found ones but that doesn’t make us any more loved by God. As the found ones we have to be willing, unlike the older brother in the parable of the Lost Son, to help in the finding and rejoice when the lost and treasured are found.

If nothing else I hope this article is a good reminder that you were and are treasured and loved and that each of us are called to look at the world and see 6,372,797,742¹ treasured people - most of them lost.

Like always, this article is meant to promote thought and discussion and if you disagree, it resonated with you, or you were challenged, please feel free to let me know. I am always open to talking - feel free to call, drop in, go for coffee or email me (bryce@devonalliancechurch.ca).

¹ Taken from the US Census bureau, URL: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldpop.html>