



17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
October 6, 2019  
Luke 15:1-10

“Love the Lost Like Christ”

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! In the name of Jesus, dear fellow lost sinners who have been found by the Good Shepherd,

How much is a person worth? Russell Wilson is the top paid NFL player and he makes about 2.1 million dollars per game that he plays. Brian Duperreault the CEO of American International Group the highest paid CEO makes over \$122k per day in his job. A website calculated how much a stay at home mom is worth (when you include all of the things she does, taxi driver, medic, child psychologist, etc) that she is worth about \$162,000 per year. Someone calculated how much all the elements of a human body are worth- the oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, etc. and they came up with the net worth of a human body as \$4.50. So, how much are you worth? How much is your life worth?

To some the life that God created inside a woman through the miracle of conception is not worth the physical or emotional hardship of carrying that child and giving birth to that child so they abort that life. To them that life wasn't worth it. To others the life that God has preserved to an old, elderly age is not worth to some the cost of continuing that life. To a person who murders another human being that life that they murdered was not worth living any more. To a person who considers suicide, their life isn't worth living anymore. How much are the lives of people worth? How much is life worth to you? How much are souls worth to you?

This morning Jesus gives us two stories that illustrate just how precious *every* life, *every* soul, *every* person is to our God. May He give us the same care of souls that He has.

Our account starts out with Jesus continuing on his final journey to Jerusalem. And we're told that **“the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.”** Jesus' teaching left no one out. But we notice that it was particularly the ones who were looked down on and disregarded by most people who were attracted to Jesus and Jesus' message. **“But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’”** How could this Rabbi, how could this supposed 'teacher,' defile himself by associating with such worthless people?

So, Jesus told them these stories because He wanted them to know that he saw them as very precious souls. So, he tells them about a shepherd who has one hundred sheep and loses just one of those sheep. If you've had herds or flocks, you know how it is. One gets lost, one escapes. You could just chalk that up to the costs of doing business, right? You lose one here, you lose one there, but that's the business. But not this shepherd. He leaves the 99 and searches for that lost sheep. And notice what he has to do: joyfully puts in on his shoulders and goes home. I'm told that sheep aren't like your pets. You know, we have two dogs and before we put up a fence, they would sometimes wander away. We'd chase after them, we'd call them, we'd finally give up and eventually they would come home. I guess sheep aren't like that. Even when you find the sheep, it's not going to follow you back, someone who once was a shepherd said, “A sheep is a stupid animal, it loses it's direction continually, so when you find it, you must seize it, throw it to the ground, tie its legs and put it over your shoulders and carry it home.” Then this Shepherd calls his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him for his lost sheep was found.

And then Jesus told a story about a woman who had ten coins and loses one of them. What does she do? She gets down on her hands and knees, she lights a lamp, she sweeps the floor until she finds that one lost coin. Then what? She throws a party and invites her friends and neighbors to celebrate with her because what was lost was now found.

Lost and found. That's why Jesus came. He came to seek and to save the lost. That's you and me, isn't it? He came to purchase and win me, a lost and condemned creature. What did you say earlier in this service? “I am by nature sinful,

disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions, deserve your punishment both now and in eternity." I am totally worthless.

But what did the Good Shepherd do? He came, the Good Shepherd laid his life down for the sheep. The Good Shepherd took the place of every lost sheep and laid His life down. All we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross for you and for me and for all. And that's not it! The Shepherd went in search for you. Maybe he found you when you were just an infant in the waters of your baptism, maybe he found you later on through His Word, but he found you.

But sheep love to wander. Maybe the Lord has had to find you multiple times in life. I recently heard that someone figures that the average person falls away and becomes lost an average of 3 times in their life. Perhaps it happens when they go away to college and are living on their own, perhaps it happens you move to a new city and are so busy with life and with a new job that you don't have time for God, perhaps its when you lose someone close to you, a loved one and you're so upset but instead of turning to the only one who can give you comfort, you turn away.

But here you are. You're here this morning. Why? Maybe you're here because dad and mom made you come, maybe you're here because this is what you do on Sunday mornings, maybe you're here because you're visiting and looking for a church, but you're here. You're here because Jesus looked for you and he found you. He eagerly searched for you.

Why? Because you're that valuable to him. How much would you give me for this pen? Would you give me 5 cents, 50 cents, a dollar, five dollars? If someone here was willing to give me 5 dollars for this pen, this pen would be worth 5 dollars. Right? That's how we determine value, it's however much someone willing to pay for it. So, how valuable are you? Your worth is determined by how much someone was willing to pay for you. And how much was the Good Shepherd willing to pay for you? **"It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."** (1 Peter 1:18). You are worth the very blood of Jesus. How much is God's Son's blood worth? It's priceless. That's what you're worth to him.

And that's what every soul is worth to our Savior. Every soul here is precious to Jesus. Every soul that's not here is precious to Jesus. Every soul that's found is precious to Jesus. Every soul that's lost is precious to Jesus. So precious that Jesus rejoices when the lost are found. The day you were baptized, Jesus rejoiced, the angels rejoiced. As you stood here this morning and confessed your sin and heard your forgiveness, the angels rejoiced, as you come to the altar this morning to receive Jesus' body and blood with the bread and the wine with a broken and contrite heart, the angels rejoice, the lost have been found.

There are lost sheep in this world, there are lost coins in this world. There are many people who are wandering on a path that leads further and further away from their Savior. There are many souls that are in danger of being lost forever in hell. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn and live. But that's why Jesus came, He came to show people their sin and where their sin would lead, He came to show their salvation and the forgiveness of sins in Him. Jesus rejoices when these precious souls see their lost condition, despair of finding the way themselves, and trust in Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

So, how do we get a love for the lost like Christ? You look at yourself. You were lost. You were headed for eternal danger, eternal death. But Jesus found you. Jesus rejoiced over you like a shepherd over his newly found sheep or a woman over her newly found coin.

Jesus places an infinite value on souls and Jesus has an infinite willingness to receive lost sinners. Know who you are infinitely lost, infinitely valued, and found for all eternity. Seek and speak in a way that those who are lost in sin may be found by Jesus' infinite love and rescued for all eternity. That's how you love the lost like Christ. Amen.