

## Luke 15:1-10 Sermon 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019 Sermon

### **Pray.**

It great to be with you today. I have retired from my position as Priest in Charge at St Marys Cooperating Parish in Glen Innes and I have decided to join with you here at St Paul's. It is great to be able to do a service with you today. Today we have two stories in our gospel reading about things that are lost. First there is the lost sheep then there is the lost coin, both stories lead into joy as the sheep or the coin that are lost are found and they are celebrated. It is like our Hymn that we have just sung as well "I once was lost but now am found and was blind but now I see. Great words that make you think about God's love. How do you react when things are lost? we all react differently some of us say oh well it is gone, perhaps it will eventually turn up and others of us like to look and look until what we are looking for is found. If you are like me sometimes you do both things depending in your mood at the time and also what it is you have lost.

I was thinking about this reading when I was at gymnastics with my granddaughter. I was munching away on a bag of pebbles which I really shouldn't have been, but Ashlee usually gets a treat when she is out with me and I had bought a bag for myself as well. Anyway, I emptied out a few into my hand and I dropped one. So, what did I do, I left those ones in my hand and went looking for the one I had dropped, eventually finding it. Then when I sat down again the ones in my hand had started to melt a bit. It caused me some interesting reflection on finding the one that is lost.

I then went on thinking about this story of the shepherd leaving the flock of sheep and going looking for the one who was missing. One sheep being lost in Jesus time would have been quite important as the shepherd was looking after them for someone else. He had to find the one who had run off as he was responsible for the flock. Another piece of information that is important, is that the Shepherd would not have been alone there would have been other shepherds with him, so when he left to find the lost sheep. The others would have still been where he left them when he returned as they would have been looked after by other shepherds. As shepherding sheep was not something that you did on your own.

With the women and the lost coin, she also worked hard to find what was lost looking everywhere for it and even lighting a candle to try and find it in the dark places in her home. Eventually she did find it. Then what did she do she threw a party and invited all her neighbours as did the shepherd. As what was lost was found.

Jesus is telling us all that we can all at times find ourselves lost. We all experience those difficult times when we lose something, and we experience these times quite often don't we? They could be anything that is important to us. Like sickness, death, job losses, money problems, relationships that do not work out when we thought that they would, and there are many other things that come along, which are not great to experience. But that is how life is to us unpredictable.

When we look at this in a deeper way though, we find that the love and grace that comes from God cannot be taken away from us and it is learning to say that we can be content with God's help through any of these difficulties, Although sometimes it does take time. As well as God's love it is His joy that helps us, a

joy of God's love and care as we need to be people of joy. Joy that is based on the love of God who never gives up on us.

Joy that is the deep peace and contentment that comes from knowing that we are deeply loved, and nothing can ever separate us from that. The Love of God, that we have received and go on receiving no matter what.

For many of us the most effective way we receive God's love is through another person. Just like God gave us Jesus who bought God's presence to us and then went on to leave the Holy Spirit with us. Through this Spirit we share God's love and grace with others as well as receiving all that we need as well. This I would say is known as deep down overwhelming joy. It may not show in our faces and we may show it in different ways. This deep-down joy helps us to live in a way that nothing else can.

We are all different and have different needs and show our joy in different ways. A piece I found about this says that we are striped, let me explain. A teacher asked the kids one day if all the bad children were painted red and all the good children were painted green what colour would you be? So today what colour would you be Red or green? It is a tough question.

Then one very wise child said I would be striped!!!!!!  
Everyone but Jesus is striped, we are all a combination of colours. And a combination of being lost and being found. Interesting isn't it when you look at it like this. We could also say we are a combination of good and bad and there are some parts of us that we just do not want others to know about. We are not completely, complete and neither are we completely lost or completely found. On the front cover of your service books you may have noticed that the picture is all striped as well, just to make sure you remember what I have talked about!!!!!!.

We can see that Jesus wants us to understand something important about God. That He values and seeks out everyone and he wants to hold everyone close to him and love them as they are, even the most unlikely people. And God celebrates with joy when the lost are found. As we are all valued no matter what colour stripes we have. So, let us go out into our week rejoicing and full of joy as we know God searches for us, keep us in his sight, and never gives up on us when we are lost.

And a prayer to finish: Let us Pray  
Dear God  
I know that I am not perfect  
I know that I sometimes forget to pray  
I know that I sometimes question my faith  
I know that I sometimes lose my temper  
But thank you for loving me unconditionally  
and giving me another day to start over  
Amen.