

Congregational Sunday, Luke 15:8-10, Parable of the Lost Coin, 6/8/25

Twice a year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall, we have Congregational Sunday where we have a state of the church address. A vision refresh, you'll hear updates and encouragements on some areas of ministry from our leaders, our finances, at the end of the second service we will have a very brief vote on the next fiscal budget. We do these on Sundays because we are a family, whether you are an official member, attender or checking us out, we want you to know what this church is about, get encouraged, and get engaged in the life of the church.

Some of you look forward to these Sundays to hear from our ministry leaders, others because it's the shortest sermon you are going to get from me all year, either way, I'm glad you are here. Turn to Luke 15 where Jesus gives a series of three parables that reveal the very heart of Jesus for people that are spiritually lost: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Sons. Today we are going to read the 2nd of these parables and what this means for the vision of Brandywine Valley Church.

Luke 15 *Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “*

*This man receives sinners and eats with them.”***3** *So he told them this parable,*

8 *“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?*

9 *And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that*

*I had lost.’***10** *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

What is it that prompts Jesus to share these parables? The religious leaders are questioning the ministry focus. What was their ministry focus? Insiders, religious people. Those who looked like them, talked like them, had the same beliefs and morality as them. What was Jesus' ministry focus? Outsiders, the spiritually lost, the sinners, those who knew they needed him. These outsiders felt completely welcomed in and comfortable enough to share a meal with the Divine Son of God. What does that tell you about the hospitality of Jesus, the welcoming smile, the not easily offended presence of Jesus, about his patience with their rough around the edges language, with their thorny questions, with their opposing opinions?

If Jesus has a vision to welcome in lost people then so must we.

We must have a vision to reach the non-religious, church dropouts, the skeptics, the lost, the overlooked. And we must do this with the same kind of welcoming smile, hospitable spirit, non-judgmental and patient presence of Jesus. We want to do this not only through our

ministries, but with our facilities. This is at the heart of our ON THE MOVE building renovation, to make our church as warm, welcoming, accessible, and safe for all people as possible. Today you will hear an update from Pastor Todd on our renovation progress, timeline, and funding. Your financial investment is a demonstration that you share the heart of Jesus in drawing in all people, especially the lost to Himself.

But Jesus doesn't only welcome the lost. Notice the action of the woman in the parable when she realizes she lost a coin: she lights the lamp, she sweeps the entire house, every nook and cranny, for this coin. We've probably all been there searching for our keys, or a passport, or wallet. We did this a few years ago looking for our son's brand new lost airpods. Pulling out the couch, flipping the cushions, every drawer, every pockets, getting on our hands and knees with the flashlight in the car. Whatever it takes because it's valuable to us. We never found the airpods, but this woman does find her silver coin. In this woman we see a vivid portrait of Jesus' mindset when it comes to lost people. Here's Jesus on his hands and knees, flipping cushions, diligently searching for the lost. Amazing! Jesus has a "whatever it takes" mindset when it comes to searching for lost people. And Jesus proved it. What will it take to reunite lost people to the heart of God forever? Leaving heaven to come to earth living in poverty working a blue collar job? Whatever it takes. Being rejected by many of his own people? Whatever it takes. Being betrayed, beaten, mocked? Whatever it takes. Dying on a cross, sacrificing my very life? Whatever it takes. This is Jesus.

If Jesus has a "Whatever it takes" mindset about seeking lost people then so must we. We not only welcome in, but we must diligently seek them out and build ministry and infrastructure around reaching them. Whatever it takes. Sacrificing more of our resources, our time, talents, our financial treasures? Whatever it takes. We need to expand and open up more spots for VBS so kids can be introduced to Jesus? Whatever it takes. We need to create more accessible space and make changes to be more inclusive to reach kids and youth with special needs? Whatever it takes. We need to add a third service even if that means staying a little later to serve in a ministry on a Sunday or personally having to sacrifice some of my comfort of my preferred hour or style? Whatever it takes. That's the mindset of Brandywine because it's the mindset of Jesus. (For 9am we will have a conversation next Sunday in the Fellowship Hall about how to do this well, doing our very best to balance the need for expansion and caring well for our own people).

Jesus welcomes in the lost, Jesus seeks out the lost with a whatever-it-takes mindset. And then look at what happens in the parable. This silver coin was so precious to this woman that when she found it, she couldn't keep the excitement to herself, this news has to be shared! She texts her neighbors- the party is on! Pop the bottles, hit the strobe light, dance party right now!

If Jesus rejoices when the lost are found then so must we. Every life is precious to Jesus, and so when even one sinner comes to repentance, when the lights get turned on for just one lost person- the party is on! Not just here...but in heaven. This isn't a metaphor. Literally they are overjoyed. And so we rejoice with the angels. We rejoice over the baptisms, when just one child is reached through VBS, we rejoice when we hear story after story of lives being changed

through Christ. And it's a joy that makes us willing to endure challenges because every life is worth it! And may our joy spill out over into our neighbors in Wilmington and beyond.

This is Jesus. This is us. If that gets you excited, if that makes your hair stand on edge, if that gets you up. You are in the right place.