

Seeking the Lost

This article on Luke 15 is edited from the Ligonier Ministries

As can be observed from pet lovers all over the world, typically, dog or cat owners will search high and low for their pets if their animal is missing. They might walk through their neighborhood posting signs or hand out flyers door-to-door with pictures hoping someone has seen their pet; or if a dog yelling out its name hoping that it will come running. The local animal shelter may even receive several visits a day from these owners, hoping their missing pets have been picked up and brought there. As a last effort, they might even offer a reward for the animal's safe return.

While dogs and cats are a good gift from the Lord, it is indeed sad that too many followers of Christ are more concerned to find lost pets than they are to find lost people. We easily grow complacent about our participation in the mission Jesus has given to us (Matt. 28:18–20). The work of world evangelization is so large that we often ignore it. When thinking about missionary and evangelistic tasks, most of us probably overlook the desperate needs found even in our own communities. Church buildings are often treated as doctor's offices. Just as a physician waits at his practice for patients to come for treatment, so too do we act as if sinners will of their own accord visit the church in order to find salvation.

The task of seeking, however, belongs to the Christian community. As indicated in the three parables found in today's passage, God's passion is to seek out the lost. If they died tonight, the unrepentant sinners around us would go to hell, and our concern for these unbelievers is to be so great that we search them out, share the Gospel, and then rejoice when someone trusts Jesus (Luke 15:1–10). Lest there be any doubt about the Creator's desire to find and be reconciled to lost sinners, the parable of the prodigal son tells us that the Father Himself rejoices when errant men and women return to Him (vv. 11–32).

We who have been found by Christ must never forget our desperation, bewilderment, purposelessness, and hopelessness before our Lord and Savior found us (Eph. 2:11–12). Let's go out of our way to find and befriend non-Christians so that we might be used by Jesus to lead them into His Kingdom.

How much do you know about the spiritual needs where you live? Where is the closest neighborhood to yours that has been given over to drug lords and other criminals because the hope of Christ is so absent? Where is the affluent area around you in which people attempt to find purpose in their possessions because they do not know the One who makes life meaningful? Work with your church leaders to find unbelievers and then go and do what you can to bring the Gospel to them.