

Jesus teaches us the Kingdom Life: “Lost and found”

“I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

*(Luke 15.7 *and 10)*

SPRINGLINE PARISH DIOCESE OF LINCOLN
YEAR C + TRINITY 13 + 2019, THE WORD OF GOD:
JEREMIAH 4.11-12, 22-28; 1 TIMOTHY 1. 12-17; LUKE 15.1-10

The key words of last two Sundays:

“Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14. 27)

“Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 14, 11)

Introduction

Luke 15 – a chapter with three major ‘Lost and found’ stories: sheep, coin, son
St Anthony, RC Saint, patron of ‘lost and found’ cases.

We all know someone who has lost something and found.

- My niece Saumya lost her luggage in Germany just before her wedding, delighted when she got it back after two weeks and two days before her wedding!
- I lost my wallet and documents some years ago and was delighted when I got at least the documents back, almost miraculously!

“Lost and found” is an incredible theme!

So we are able to connect to what Jesus is telling us today.

The key verse in the gospel today as given above: *“There is more joy over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who don’t need repentance.”*

The example of Jesus in the gospel today:

- tells us a great deal about who Jesus is.
- We also remember his words: *“Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”*

In other words, Jesus is telling us:

- *“No matter how your life has turned out, don’t be anxious, I can sort you out. I can help you.”*

The tax collectors and sinners

In fact, as we heard in the gospel, tax collectors and sinners, people of ill repute go to Jesus to listen to him, to draw strength from him.

The tax collectors were detested by the population because they were agents of the Roman occupation.

The sinners here probably refer to people often rejected by society, those who often do not fit into the social expectations.

In fact, Jesus is reprimanded by the so-called religious leaders of his day, the Pharisees. They question Jesus: “What kind of person you are who welcomes such people?”

More joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

In order to teach the Pharisees a lesson, Jesus tells the story of the shepherd who leaves 99 of his sheep in the wilderness so as to find the one lost sheep. And how once the lost sheep is found, he organises a party to celebrate the sheep that is found.

Jesus also gives the story of the woman who loses a coin and finds it and celebrates with her friends and neighbours. “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.”

“There is more joy over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who don’t need repentance.”

This is not to encourage us to be like the lost sheep or the prodigal son. Jesus is teaching us an important truth about the Kingdom of God.

The message of Jesus for us today

Jesus is teaching us important truths:

1. Who is God: He will do everything for us especially when we are lost.

- that he is a compassionate, loving God. He doesn't leave us or abandon us if we are all messed up or have lost our way. Like the good shepherd, he comes searching for us. This is a comforting thought.
 - "I have carved you in the palm of my hand.."
 - "I have loved you with an everlasting love..."
 - We may have lost our way, we may be struggling to make sense of life, we may have lost a friend or a family member, we may know someone who has lost a job, a house, a reputation.
 - We have the assurance of a God who is faithful and waits for us, who loves us even when we forget him, who will never abandon us no matter what.
2. Jesus wants us to have the same attitude of compassion for others.
- The way of Jesus, the way of the Kingdom, the way of Heaven, is the way of love and compassion and mercy, very different from the way of the world where the lost, the have-nots, the poor, the powerless, the homeless, the addicts have no place!
 - Jesus is teaching us that as His People, as The Church of Christ, we too must go searching for the weak and the lost, those whom society rejects. As Christians, followers of Jesus, we are called to imitate Jesus, to have a heart for the poor and the weak and the social outcasts.

Let us pray.

[ST Mattapally]