

# To Pursue The Lost | Luke 15:1-7

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. Well, good morning, everyone. I'm really glad to see all of you here. Friends, family, first-timers, or regular attenders, or everything in between.

I'm really glad that you are here. And I want you to know that you are loved by God. No matter who you are, where you are on life's journey, what situations or circumstances you may be going through, or what you have going through.

The Lord is constant, and He's there for you in every season of life. He extends an invitation for you to respond in faith, to know Him, to grow in Him, and to be moved to do good in the name of Christ.

[1:17] Today, we are going over the parable of the lost sheep. We have been doing this sermon series about the parables of Christ.

The name of the series is called Thy Kingdom Come. And we've been going over these parables to have an understanding, a better understanding, of the teachings of Christ.

Many of us, we may know some of these parables. Maybe it's your first time hearing it. But in all of these parables, there is simplicity, but there's also depth.

And our approach in this is to open the Word of God, to read it, and observe what is going on within the text. Then we look at what we can learn on a personal level.

Because it's important for us to grow as individuals, to come to the knowledge of who Jesus is, and for us believers, to grow in the faith.

[2:16] And then finally, we have the application, which is what do we do with the text? Learning what we learn, it's so important and critical for us.

Learn, grow, but also live it out. Live out your faith every single day with your everyday interactions. This last week, we talked about this idea of the Good Samaritan, asking the question of who our neighbor is.

And our neighbor, in a simplistic standpoint, is really anyone that we interact with, whether that's the coffee shop, the grocery store, or the person that cuts us off as we're driving wherever we go, right? Let's be honest here. You know, God's love is relentless. He pursues every single person. We believe in the living God.

God being present everywhere. And knowing who you are. You are made in the image of God. And as I mentioned, he extends this invitation for all to respond to his abundant grace.

[3:32] Grace overflowing. That's what the word Ontario means when you think of the Japanese. Grace overflowing. Or grace abundance.

In abundance. And that's to remind us about who our God is. That his grace, his love overflows. That God is everlasting to everlasting.

He remains constant in this ever-changing world. So many changes and things that are happening, not only in our own community, but also in this country and in this world.

It can certainly be overwhelming for us. But we know that not only do we have the word of God, but we have the presence of God with us. Knowing God leads us to restoration through faith in him.

And we respond by publicly declaring it. That's why this Sunday is very special as we're doing baptisms today. You know, nothing is worse than losing something of great value.

[4:37] How many of you guys have lost these before? Not my own keys, but your own keys. Let's be honest here. We've lost keys before. Or how many of you have lost your glasses, your wedding ring, your phone, right?

That's the classic one nowadays, right? You've lost your phone. And you could have sworn it was not where it typically was. Maybe under documents or maybe hidden in the couch in the one section that you've got to reach way down in to get.

We've all been there. We've had those moments where we've lost something of great value. And we search diligently for those things, much as we've learned previously in the parable of the lost coin, the woman that was searching diligently, sweeping her house.

And there's a connection that we find here in Scripture with the parable of the lost sheep and also with the lost coin. We think about these things that we lose and how it's sentimental to us.

And how did it feel to be in that moment? Think of the last time you lost something, and I hope it wasn't today or this morning or yesterday for that matter. How did it feel to really search for something that was of great value that you lost?

[5:54] There was the care. There was the intentionality. There may have even been the rushing through items to find that lost thing. And upon finding it, then how did you feel?

Well, I hope you all felt good when you found that lost thing. We think about it. If we care so deeply about searching for that which is lost, how much more does God care for those who are spiritually lost?

When we think of the story of Jonah, the first sermon series that I did here, there's the part where the prophet, God provides a plant and gives him shade.

And he loves his plant, and then eventually the plant dies. But God was showing Jonah the prophet, if you cared so much about this plant, how much more do I care for my people?

Which is very similar to what we're seeing here. We care so much about the things that we lose, how much more does God care about finding that which is lost?

[7:06] Think about that as we go through. What if God has been pursuing you all along, and you may not even realize it. What if God calls for you to do the same, to seek those who are lost?

I think of that song, I once was lost, but now am found. I was blind, but now can see. And what if today was your moment to say, I have been found, and I recognize that God loves me, and he has a plan and a purpose for me, that God made me with intentionality and with care?

Think about that. So let's turn our Bibles. We're going to turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 15, verses 1 through 7, church, in your ESVP Bibles.

It's page 1039, if you're using this blue Bible. Or you can go to your Bible of choice. If you're a KJV-er or an NIV-er, or if you just like using your phone, you're welcome to join.

So are we there? Luke chapter 15, verses 1 through 7. So we begin. Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him.

[8:37] And the Pharisees and the scribes, they grumbled, saying what? This man receives sinners and eats with them.

What's so wrong with eating with sinners? We read that. But it goes on further, where he told them this parable. What man of you, having 100 sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.

And just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

We read that. There's a pattern that happens here in Scripture. If you still have your Bibles open and you go all the way down to verse 10 for the parable of the lost coin, it says, Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God of one sinner who repents.

[9:57] We find this kind of pattern that was going on. To know that there is joy in heaven. More joy in heaven over one sinner who repents is a really challenging thought, isn't it?

One person repenting? You have 99, Jesus. What's going on with that? And so, we begin with the criticism versus compassion, right?

Where Jesus is responding to this grumbling of the Pharisees and the scribes for welcoming sinners. Well, we can see on the surface that Jesus, he spends time with anyone.

Much how Jesus extends the invitation for all of us, regardless of what our title and our status is. I always love how when you read this, you see this distinction between a tax collector and a sinner. Why would you make such a distinction? Why wouldn't you just say, just sinners here? But the tax collectors viewed upon as, well, we would see them nowadays as, well, I guess the ultra-rich or the scammers of the world or whatever it may be.

[11:16] Not looked on very favorably. We can kind of think of an idea of what that would look like today. So Jesus responds to those criticisms for the first three verses. And I have a video on here which is to show, it's the one of the sheep, it's that next slide.

We see one sheep here. Now, for some of you, you may, sheep are quite dumb animals.

I mean, we're in a rural community. Many of us at least seen sheep, right? Or pet sheep. They're not the most intelligent of creatures out there.

And I know it's kind of hard when we're all called sheep and I'm like, well, God really thinks we're dumb then, I guess. But the reality is, compared to the knowledge and the scope of what God knows, we are like sheep.

We see this, that the shepherd leaves the 99 to pursue the one lost sheep. I want you to understand that in the finding, we can go to that next slide then.

[12:32] The shepherd's search for the lost. Right? The shepherd doesn't scold or shame the sheep. What does he do instead?

He carries that sheep home. Sometimes, we can think of times where we might have gone astray or we might have been lost. What matters is that you being found by the great shepherd, by the Lord. So there's no scolding or shame. It's you're found and there's a celebration that comes from that.

Then, of course, there's the joy of restoration in the finding, right?

He's carrying the sheep back. If you could imagine that image, you're searching so diligently to find your sheep. You find it and you pick it up and you're carrying it back because you're so excited to find your sheep.

Much like how in the beginning I was saying when you're looking for something that is of great value, you're searching and you've got to find it. Then when you find it, you're excited.

[13:37] You're ready to celebrate. I mean, for those of us who might have lost something for weeks, you want to tell everybody when you find it. You know, there have been, I've lost glasses before.

It's taken me weeks to find. I have to wear my old glasses. I don't like this prescription. I want to find the old one and it bugs you, right? And so we think about that here, right? The shepherd doesn't focus on the cost of the search, but rather the joy in finding.

Because when we're looking for something, it doesn't matter how much time. I mean, yes, we've got to go to work. We've got our obligations, but we keep searching. Sometimes it occupies days, hours.

It frustrates you. Or you might be like, man, I lost it. But then when you find it. And then you have heaven's celebration over one sinner, which is the greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

And may I remind us this idea of repentance. Many people make this claim, and it's true. When we repent, we are turning from our sin.

[14:52] But repentance, it's much greater than that. It is the changing of one's mind. The changing of one's mind about who God is. The changing, the continual changing of our minds.

Are we not growing? Are we not continuing to be molded by the Lord? There's continued repentance. It's not just turning from sin. It's being molded by God. Being transformed by the renewal of our mind, as it were, as it mentions in Romans.

So when we think of this idea of repentance, I want you guys to think that it's much more than turning from sin. It's the changing of your mind about who Jesus Christ is. Let's remember that.

Metanoia. Or metaneo. God the Father, the angels, and all of heaven rejoice. I've mentioned before, and I'll mention it again, if you guys have watched It's a Wonderful Life, when Clarence gets his wings.

What happens? A bell rings, right? And it's a cute little thing that Christmas and New Year's time, right? Or it's like, he finally got his wings, right?

[16:01] And that's a small little comparison, I admit, but it's still one that we can think of. Think of all of heaven rejoicing. We've got another one.

Let's celebrate that. Let's celebrate the sinner who has changed his mind. And perhaps you can see yourself in a story like this.

Maybe you have felt lost. Maybe you feel lost currently. Are you the lost sheep? Or maybe you're one of the 99. And that's okay too. So with that, what does all of this text mean?

Number one is that the shepherd represents God. His love is relentless and sacrificial, just like how we know John 3.16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes shall not what?

Perish, but have eternal life or everlasting life. Depending on your translation. It's the same idea here. We then go into, getting pressed on time here, this, celebrate in joining the 99.

[17:07] That in the same way that heaven rejoices over a sinner that repents, we too should celebrate when someone believes in Jesus. we should join just like how heaven does.

We think for a moment, believing in Christ, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, that's an internal decision. And when we have our baptisms that we'll be having pretty soon here, that is the public declaration.

It is the external proclamation that Jesus is all I need. And I'm going to live my life for him. So we think about those two things that God's timing is remarkable.

That we're going over this parable as people are getting baptized. This wasn't something that I planned. This was something that just happened. And what a wonderful tie-in we can learn and we can think of.

That we are to celebrate those that believe in Christ and those that make that public proclamation in faith. And the third thing is to reflect and mirror God's heart in the pursuit.

[18:15] In the same way that God actively pursues you, you are to seek the lost. Build relationships with them. There's a lot of people who, see, the thing is, we don't know why that sheep was lost.

Did he run off? Did he get distracted? I don't know. There's debate on that even with biblical scholars here. But what matters is that this sheep was lost.

Who do you know that is lost? Who do you know that needs healing and restoration? Maybe the sheep was hurt and was discouraged.

Maybe the sheep again was distracted by the things of this world. We can think of many distractions just like our phones that we lose and we pursue so much, right? Believers are called in the same way to mirror and to show the love of Christ to pursue the lost in sharing the gospel.

Sharing in their testimony to other people. That's why we serve the church. We serve the community. We're all called to become all that God wants us to be.

[19:27] And then finally, we go to the application point. Or let me say this much. If you identify with the lost sheep, just remember, man may fail you.

Man may hurt you. But God loves you. I want you to know that. God is always there for you.

I personally cannot think, I think of the times I have been hurt by other Christians, by non-believers. It doesn't matter. But I know that my foundation is in the living God.

That will not shake my faith. Even though man may fail me, God will never fail me. He is pursuing you. If you feel lost, just know that God's there with you.

In the hills and the valleys of life. The application then, what do we do with this? Is we respond to God's pursuit in faith. Begin.

[20:39] I want you to know. Look at those, your neighbors, or think of people that you may know.

You can respond to God's pursuit by believing in him. You can also respond by exhibiting the light, love, and truth of Christ to others. So think for a moment, who can you talk to?

Or how can you live out this light of God, love of God, truth of God? Sometimes it's being present with people. Sometimes it's praying with people.

Sometimes it's, it just varies from person to person. I wish there was just one, you know, one size fits all, but it's not. Every situation is different. And consider, have compassion for those who are lost, those who are struggling.

Number two, just as Christ pursued you, pursue the lost. So we respond to God's invitation through faith and we do the same. We seek and we build relationships with those.

[21:50] How can we not do that? How can we not show kindness and compassion? How can we not build relationships with people who are struggling? Those that may have been disenfranchised.

Not only are we called to share in our faith, we're called to share in the transforming power of the Word of God. Letting people know how God's changed our own lives. Are you the same person that you were before you knew the Lord or did God change you?

I'm sure most of us can respond by saying, God has changed me in such remarkable ways. I even think of how my own calling. You know how long I neglected God's call?

And how much struggle and resistance, wrestling I had? You know what I wanted to do? I wanted to be in a startup company, a sports car manufacturing company.

That was before God called me. And time after time, I kept seeing, maybe it was kind of this seed planted in my head. Maybe this isn't what God wants me to do.

[23:00] But I kept denying myself and I thought, no, I want this company to kick off because I'll be like Elon Musk, right? I'll be honest here. But I'm not Elon Musk and I'm glad I'm not.

Because God called me for a much different path in the same way that God calls you for a better path. And he wants to transform you where you become, you put on the new self. Think of how you are a new creation in Christ and let God work in and through your life.

Let him. Because I'm telling you, the plan that God has for your life is much better than what the world has to offer. So many of us, we seek other things.

Seek the Lord. The next thing is to celebrate new believers. baptism, repentance, and restoration. Think about that.

If you know anyone that has become a Christian and believed in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, believing that I, Jesus, is all that I need.

[24:09] Celebrate that. Whether it's a family member or a friend, celebrate that. Baptism as we're going to do. Repentance, the changing of mind, that's another big one. I didn't understand this, but now I do.

I didn't understand 1 John, but now I do. Or I didn't understand how Christ fulfilled prophecies, but now I do. That's something to celebrate.

And then, of course, restoration. The brokenness of families, the brokenness of individuals, where people become restored, and they change. And that change being transformation.

Rejoice with heaven again when someone repents or returns to God. So I want to ask you as we're closing, what if God is calling for you to be a part of someone's restoration?

What if God is calling you to be restored? What if you are the one that God has been pursuing, and today is your day to come home? I want you to think about that as we close here.

[25:20] And just as God calls for us to enter into a relationship with Him through faith, we are called to make that decision internally. It is the greatest decision that you can make for your life that not only affects your life here on the earth, but affects your life eternally.

And part of that also is to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ externally through baptism. baptism.

So let's go ahead and pray. And we're going to go ahead and prepare for our time of baptism.

Father, we thank you for this message about how you seek the lost. such a powerful message where you have these Pharisees who are criticizing and questioning, and you reveal this parable about how the shepherd seeking the one sheep that is lost, and how there's celebration in the finding and the restoration of that one person with the 99.

And Father God, I pray if there's anyone who has felt lost, hurt, disenfranchised, whatever it is, I pray that they will feel your love.

I pray that they will come to the knowledge of who you are. And for those that are part of the 99, may they be encouraged, may they have the heart to love the lost as they were loved and they were lost once before.

[26:48] Father, today we are shifting to, we're celebrating your pursuit of the lost in a tangible way through baptism.

May we celebrate these three baptisms. We rejoice in them boldly going out in faith. And just, Father, we are so grateful that you move in and through our lives every single day.

We pray for transformation. We pray for the changing of mind, repentance. I pray for every single person. I don't know what is going on in their life, but you sure do.

Let there be comfort where comfort is needed. Let there be guidance where guidance is needed. And be with us as we go to our time of baptism together.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our faith, that we pray and we all say together, Amen? Amen. Amen. Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church.

[27:55] I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ. For more sermons and resources, visit [OntarioCommunityChurch.org](https://OntarioCommunityChurch.org). May God bless you as you live out His grace and truth every single day.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.