

# **Search Party**

## **3. Lost and Found**

**August 21, 2022**

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Good morning! My name is Christy Gibas. I'm one of the pastors on staff, and I'm so glad you are here for our third week of search party!

Have you ever searched for something, and you just couldn't find it? It's super frustrating! A week ago, I went to a popular roast beef fast food joint that I haven't been to in years to get my husband a sandwich to send in his lunch. As I sat in the drive through, I asked myself...is this as good as I remember it to be? And you guessed it, I bought myself one.

When I got home, Pastor Steve called me. So, I answered the phone and walked all over my house with sandwich in hand. I walked around my house outside. I walked up and down my driveway...I walked to the basement...to the back porch...I mean everywhere. I was all over the place.

I hung up the phone about 20 minutes or so later and realized I was no longer holding my sandwich. And so, the hunt began. I looked everywhere. I looked outside, the front porch, the back porch, the garage, the mailbox, (because obviously I got the mail while on the phone.) I looked in my car, my office, my bedroom, the basement, the living room, the laundry room. No joke: I searched high and low. And after being super frustrated, I gave up!

That night, I was folding clothes in my closet and found it on a shelf. I don't even remember going in there. I cracked up! I was like...this roast beef sandwich was once lost, and I celebrate because now it is found!

You know what it's like to lose something! Some of you have lost more valuable things than roast beef! A special piece of jewelry. Money. A special note that you were saving. Pictures that mean something.

Even more serious, that sinking feeling when you are in a store and you don't see your kid. Or worse, a fractured relationship with your adult child. There's real pain in that.

In this series, we are unpacking what it means to be part of the search party bringing connection to the broken relationships that God has with people who are far from Him.

Turn with me in your Bible to Luke 15:1-10 where it says:

**Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."**

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Right out of the gate, this passage tells us who is gathered around Jesus. They were “tax collectors” and “sinners.” And these folks were drawing near to hear what Jesus had to say. He had their ear. He had influence.

Have you ever had a situation where you were talking with someone but talking a little loudly so others in earshot got the message too? I am picturing that in this scenario. Jesus is addressing two groups of people. One group was gathered around wondering what Jesus had to say, then another group, the religious people who had a distaste for Jesus and a distaste for the company He attracted.

Verse 2 describes the religious people murmuring, whispering, or talking under their breath about Jesus’ engagement with the people who often gathered around Him. Jesus is being talked about by the cool kids, and instead of responding like...” why don’t you just come over here and say what you are saying,” he offers them a message of hope, to the religious, too.

There were two groups, but one message. To the sinners this was a message of hope. To the unrepentant religious, this was a shocking message. In reality, it is a message of hope to both. It’s the response that matters!

100 sheep is a pretty valuable asset to have on your balance sheet a couple of thousand years ago. The woman lost a tenth of what she had! The sinners and religious people understood what Jesus was communicating.

He speaks their language culturally. Since no one values lost people like He does at the moment, He tells these stories so they understand. Jesus uses parables to speak about a currency they get, sheep and money! The one who lost the sheep according to verse 6, goes home, calls his neighbors and friends and asks them to gather together, (sounds like a weekend church celebration) saying rejoice with me! I have found my sheep! To which Jesus adds, there will be rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents.

And again, with the coin, the woman calls a gathering for people to come together and rejoice! Jesus paints a picture of again, what's happening in heaven when the lost get found! Angels are rejoicing in the presence of God!

Jesus prioritizes lost people. This passage tells us about the priorities of Jesus. We gain the perspective of heaven from Luke about lostness. Jesus prioritizes lost people! His priorities are my priorities!

Jesus prioritizes lost people! And if I'm learning from Jesus, His priorities are my priorities. The two groups of people were likely hearing these parables a little differently.

One group who was far from Jesus and had little esteem in society was hearing, I'm valuable. The Shepherd leaves 99 because He knows they are okay to go after the one. They are likely thinking it's okay to lose one sheep, when you have 99 others.

When they hear about the woman having 10 ten silver coins, and losing one, it's a little more value. She's lost a tenth of what she has. And again, who knows what they are hearing. If we move the story to modern day sinners are hearing, I'm going to search until I find you. Religious people might be judging the irresponsibility of losing her money. And then the final act in both stories; great celebration over finding what was once lost! And testimonies!

We need to get over our distaste for people who are far from Jesus. The truth is, sometimes our hearts can be hard toward the people that Jesus is pursuing. For me, it's rough to think about it through an honest lens when I analyze how soft my heart is.

- Those politicians that we freely speak against; Jesus loves them.
- Those people who present the news, or worse, opinions and pass it off as news; Jesus wants them.
- Immigrants, homeless, addicted, wealthy, poor, black, white, tattoos, soccer moms, CEOs, artists, democrats, republicans, Americans, Africans, Afghans, Israelis, Palestinians...all people who Jesus came for. And I must make a decision that I will do more than not speak against them...but I will prioritize them the way Jesus did.

I heard a report a week ago...87,000 new IRS agents...I'm about to go make some friends! There's a whole litany of people in society we aren't supposed to hang with. But what if we did?

The worst part is that we say, "Gosh, I don't know any of these people." But my answer is, "we do!" We are overlooking them and staying in our bubble.

When we are following Jesus, those who are far from Jesus will be interested in us and those who are religious might get a little annoyed with us. We may have to have some

coffees. And sometimes, we may just have to be misunderstood for the sake of the gospel.

A few years ago, I was invited to a birthday party of an old family friend who I hadn't seen in a while. He had a lot of changes in his life since the last time we made contact. I want to keep it PG, so follow me when I tell you his life had become more flamboyant, and his evening gig is female impersonator.

Now, I knew there would be other folks like this at the party. And I'm sorry to admit the first filter of accepting the invitation was not through the lens of what Jesus would have me do. But through my own lens of what was easiest, and best for me.

As most of you know (joke), my dog has a pretty big following on the socials. And so, my first thought went to, "someone is going to snap my picture with a bunch of 'female impersonators' and I am going to have a lot of explaining to do. In other words, when my picture shows up on Facebook, I'd have a lot of coffee appointments in my future.

Then, I looked at my calendar and realized, I had another event that evening. I didn't have to think about what I should or would do anymore. I had a conflict that became convenient not to process what Jesus would have me do.

I regret to say...I dorked it up. If I could go back and do it again, I would cancel my plans. I would go. I'm sad that I didn't go. I love this guy, and I let the religious side of me get the best of me.

Jesus went where He was invited. I want to go where I am invited!

When I think about the scripture, I more closely identified with the religious people in this case. I took the path of least resistance because it was easy and I knew if I were to be seen in this crowd, that there could be muttering about me!

The word "welcome" in original text isn't just this American, or English "hey how do you do?" It is this word that means "embrace."<sup>1</sup>

The religious people of the day are saying:  
Jesus touches these people.  
He holds them.  
He embraces them.

Jesus embraces the people that the religious people of the day rejected. We can't let our aspiration for what is good, pure, and wholesome to overpower our love for those who are lost. Good, pure, and wholesome can become a blindfold to our own sin of overlooking the lost.

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Here at Crossroads, we place a heavy emphasis on obeying Jesus' command in Matthew 28 to "go and make disciples." And so, when we think about the act of making a disciple, we have to define what a disciple is. At Crossroads, we define a disciple as: *One who loves and obeys Jesus.*

If you and I are to obey that command, to go and make one of these people, then we must know what we are looking for. We talk about it all the time. We want to reach people in the area where we live, work, learn, and play. But often, we have a conversation with someone about Jesus and think we are making a disciple, when really, we are just talking to another person who's on the path but engaged in another community of faith!

So, let's get really clear today...if we are going to make a disciple, we need to know what one is (one who loves and obeys Jesus), then we also have to know what one isn't. Therefore, we are looking for non-disciples! These are ones who do not love and obey Jesus!

Jesus was gathered with tax collectors and sinners. They were people who had a genuine interest in what He had to say.

There are non-disciples out there who have a genuine interest in the things that you have to say because you bring good news! When our message is aligned with the message of Jesus, we build influence with those who are far from Him. We want to help equip you to make disciples. I want to invite you to check out our Crash Course. We have two coming up and you can register and get details at [xr.church/crashcourse](http://xr.church/crashcourse).

The Crash Course is on August 28 from 10 to 11:30 am and on September 1 from 6:30 to 8 pm. You can register at [xr.church/crashcourse](http://xr.church/crashcourse).

We want to help you obey the command of Jesus to go and make disciples and Crash Course is a great way for you to be equipped quickly to get engaged in the search party. We don't want to be culturally Christian. Our desire is to be authentic Jesus followers who are loving Him and obeying His commands.

Some hearing this message today will walk away with, okay, I'm not going to grumble like religious people about the way God interacts with people. And others may say, okay...I'm up for the party. I want to rejoice in what God is doing.

But I'm asking for a little more. I'm asking you to engage in this risky business of disciple-making. Reaching people where you live, work, learn, and play. We are going to be people who accept invitations and make invitations to people who are far from Jesus.

This past year, I was both a leader and a participant in Movement Makers, our disciple-making community. (By the way if you want to sign up Tuesday is the deadline for this year.) We had 22 people who joined the process to be transformed in character and

activated in call. Out of 22 people; 22 knew what their next step was that God was pointing them towards. We had local, national, and global disciple-making next steps.

It would take me a long time to share mine, but I want to briefly touch on it. God has given me an opportunity to establish a ministry that has a big impact in Afghanistan and Afghan people. Just so there is no confusion, this is something that I will release leadership of and I'm equipping someone else to lead because my calling is to Crossroads.

Several months ago, I was praying for one of our cases who are now like brothers and part of our organization. They had escaped to Pakistan and were resettled eventually by our organization in another country because Pakistan was not safe for them. A whole slew of miracles took place to help them get out of Pakistan and get to a safe location. I can't tell you how much I saw Jesus' hand on them, and how Jesus has continued to reveal himself to them.

But before they left Pakistan, protesting and unrest broke out. Many of my friends here at Crossroads were praying for them. We knew it would be a miracle to get to the airport and to safely get out. Each day, I prayed for them like their lives depended on it, because it did. But it really got me thinking about the people around me that I'm trying to reach for Jesus.

I really wasn't praying for them like I prayed for these guys. I felt really convicted, because the truth is, the people around me where I live, work, and play need Jesus. Their very lives depend on knowing Him.

So, the way I pray has changed over the last several months. I pray for people I'm trying to reach that I see weekly in the same way that I pray for people we are helping. I can say because of this, my heart has never been softer for people who need Jesus. It's been a very sweet year of Him meeting me privately and showing off His glory in miracles.

I am praying for people in my sphere of influence. God brings these people to my mind throughout the day, too. I want to be yielded to God in a way that brings His kingdom to the places I am and go.

On September 18, we will as a Church be doing, "Invite your One." On this card, write down the names of the people that God is highlighting to you. Put this card in your Bible, or in your car, or on your desk or tape it to your bathroom mirror. Wherever you need to have it to be reminded to pray.

I'm so grateful to be a pastor in this Church. This is a special place. I get to serve with people like you who want to go to the places, "we religious people" don't go. I get to serve with people who are Kingdom carriers. I get to serve with people who have the perspective of heaven and hearts for the lost. We're on a search. We are doing this together. So, each week, when we get together...we **get** to party. We will party each

week, heaven and earth meeting here at Crossroads Church, celebrating the lost who are now found!

As I prayed over this message, I realized that when I compartmentalize Jesus, I don't go where He goes. When I walk closely with Him, I find myself in strange places. I love going to strange places with Jesus.

Let's pray:

Jesus, we don't want to compartmentalize our faith or following of You.

We want to go where you are going by walking closely with You.

Jesus, we want to find ourselves new places.

Jesus, we want to be with lost people, because You went to lost people.

Holy Spirit lead us!

Father, we thank you in advance for a weekly celebration that will happen across all of our Regions and Life Groups. We pray for weekly celebrations of the lost getting found!

Thank you, Lord that we GET to be a part of what you are doing.

Amen