

The Lost Sheep



Monday 25th May

- Luke 15v1-6
- Matthew 18v12-14

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

The loving God pursues us. He leaves the ninety-nine to find the one. From a rational perspective, He would do better to guard his ninety-nine and forsake the one that He's lost because that would be more profitable. But actually, God's love doesn't seek profit – every individual sheep is worth pursuing. Sometimes we can be exclusive about the people that we want to show love and care to. In verse 2 we read: 'the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them"'.

But the Jesus that we claim to follow had no requirement for those he ate with. The sinners and the tax collectors were people that he came to find. Jesus went to Matthew's house – Matthew the tax collector – to have dinner with him. Jesus went out of his way to spend time to eat with a group of people whom society rejected. In the same way, Jesus left Heaven and came down, not only to dine with us but also to die for us. He has done everything to find us.

Action: Depending on where you are in the world, you may not be able to invite loved ones to church. But church was never a building, but the people of God. Therefore, in what ways can we leave our comfort zone and imitate Jesus by reaching out to them?

A prayer:

Loving God, thank You for coming to find us with Your love. Please reveal your love and peace to my friends.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for those who don't yet know Jesus, may they come to know him.

Let us love



Tuesday 26th May

- 1 John 4v7

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

What would the world be like if everybody loved each other? Imagine that! Of course love is difficult because our human nature, although capable of great love, is imperfect. Our selfishness keeps getting in the way. The Christian church is called to be a community of acceptance, forgiveness and love. This is not a cheap, easy, rose-tinted, naïve love. It is the stuff of revolution. As Mother (St) Theresa said, 'I only love God as much as I love the person I love the least'. It is only possible with the Father's love, Christ's example and the Spirit's power. And God teaches us to love as we pray. To pray is to love.

Action:

How could you remind yourself to pray for your five friends? Could you set an alarm on your phone every day to pray that they may come to know your Jesus' love?

A prayer:

Loving God, help me to know You more. Through knowing You, may I show You more and love as You love. Please show Your love to my five friends – through me and others who love You.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for all those around the world who live with real poverty; may God send them help, and hear their prayers.
- Pray for the Umoja Boys recue centre in Kenya. May God provide for them in every way.

Love is an action word.



Wednesday 27th May

- 1 John 3v16-18

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

When St John says, 'Dear children' he's speaking to everyone, all the children of God. He says we shouldn't just say we love people if we're not doing anything to show that love – that if we have material possessions and yet we don't show any pity for our brother or sister – how is that love? Not to say that that's the only way to love people, but that's a very practical way to love people. How generous are we as Christians? How caring are we as Christians? How hospitable are we as Christians, especially when it is not in our self-interest?

If we don't act, it's almost as if we think we deserve to be in a better position because it's only by God's grace that we're not in the position of the one in need. Jesus himself says: 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Everything that we do to people, we do as if we do it to Christ.

Action

How could you use what you already have to show others how alive and active the love of Jesus is?

A prayer:

Loving God, thank You for Your costly love. Please may my five friends understand something of the strength of Your love for them. Help us to use our resources well.

Prayer Focus:

- Firstly, pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray for those around the world who go to be hungry. May God send them help.
- Pray for the elderly and lonely during this virus.

Who shall separate us?



Thursday 28th May

- Romans 8v37-39

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

We expect there must be something that can separate us from the love of God. But God is saying, 'I don't care where you are, what you're doing, how far away you are: my love for you will not change.' Sometimes we think that God's love is dependent on the way we act. But God is saying, 'Listen, not even the heights of this earth could separate me or stop me from loving you.' Christianity is first a relationship with God through Jesus, not first a series of activities!

The love of God is ultimately expressed in the Cross of Christ, which stands for all time as the sign and assurance of God's unchanging love.

Action

Think about how you can show someone that they are loved and known by God.

A prayer:

Loving God, thank You for Your love from which nothing can separate us, and which does not depend on our efforts. Please reveal this love and the peace it brings in the lives of the five people I am praying for.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those who are mourning loved ones today, for whatever reason.
- Pray for families who are struggling with kids who want to get out but can't, and who are juggling responsibilities for them as well as working from home. Also for those who are losing jobs and face the future with uncertainty

The Father's Love



Friday 29th May

- Luke 15v20-24

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

How joyful God is when He welcomes us back. We can have such skewed ideas of God as if He is an angry dictator or fault-finding headteacher. But actually,

God is love and His attitude towards us is compassion and grace. Even when we are far from Him, He is willing to run and meet us, the way this father did.

Look how it says, 'But while he was still far off' – the father didn't wait for the son to come all the way to him, but he went and made up the distance. God does that. God doesn't just wait – He comes out to us in His love and He stretches His arms in welcome.

God is stretching His arm out right now, moving down the road waiting for your friends to come home.

Action

Think of how you have been hurt by someone, or disagreed with them. How could you reach out and meet them where they are, just as Jesus does for us?

A prayer:

Loving God, please get my friends on the road where they see You running to meet them. Thank You that You welcome us with joy however far or however long we have been away.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray a prayer of forgiveness and blessing for any people you need to forgive.

No other Way



Saturday 29th May

- John 14v6-7

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

Jesus was quite explicit here that he, and he alone, is the way to the Father. But what did he mean, and why did he say that? Surely in this inclusive age such exclusive claims are unacceptable?

Jesus' claim to be the only way was true because of one simple truth: Only Jesus has paid for our sins. No-one else has and no-one else can. No mere human can pay for your sins; I can't; and no other religious leader ca. Only the Son of God pays enough for my sins and for the sins of the world. Therefore whatever good ideas some other religion might have they fall down on this simple truth: without Jesus my sins are not paid for.

Action

Thank Jesus for his death on your behalf.

A prayer:

Loving God, thank You for sending Jesus into this world to pay for my sins. Thank you that because he died I know for certain that my debt is paid for ever.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- But today, let us also pray for those who are mourning loved ones today, for whatever reason.
- Pray for the message of Jesus' sacrifice for us to be preached to the whole world.

God with us



Sunday 31st May - Pentecost

- John 14v16-21

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, as I read your word, speak to me I pray and lead me into your truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection:

What a wonderful truth we celebrate today, that God is with us by His Spirit. We are not alone, because God the Holy Spirit is in us and is with us.

Now of course, sometimes we struggle to feel the reality of His presence; but that doesn't make his presence with us any less real.

And because he is with us he will help us in everything we try to do for him.

Action

Ask God to open your eyes and to show you what he wants you to do in your family or community. The ask him to give you the strength to do it by his Holy Spirit.

A prayer:

Loving God, thank you that you are with me by your Spirit. Give me the strength I need to serve you and to point others towards you.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for your own needs and for your loved ones.
- Pray a prayer your community, for God's Kingdom to Come in greater power.