

# God's Lost and Found

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, Watermark. Please remain standing. We want to now confess our faith. We actually want to read together the Nicene Creed. We talk a lot about the faith of our church and our journey that we are on here at Watermark.

And when we read the Nicene Creed, we are connected with the journey of all the churches around, not just Hong Kong, but even around the world. And it also connects us with the journey of the church over the past 2,000 years.

And so just as you read along, maybe you just take the words in and think about where are you on your journey and just seeing these words being true in your life.

So the words will be on the screen and please read with me. We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made.

[ 1 : 09 ] Of one being with the Father, through him all things were made for us and for our salvation. He came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake, he was crucified on the Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. And his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy, universal, and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen. The scripture today comes from the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel and the Gospel of Luke.

[ 2 : 17 ] Please follow along in your bulletin. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him.

For thus says the Lord God, Behold, I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep.

So I will care for my sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. Like a shepherd, he will tend his flock.

In his arm, he will gather the lambs and carry them in his bosom. He will gently lead the nursing lambs. Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near him to listen to him.

Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them. So he told them this parable, saying, What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?

[ 3 : 26 ] 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 to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who will repent than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.

In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. This is the reading of God's word. Please be seated.

How you guys doing? Oh, that's terrible. That wasn't good. That was terrible. How you guys doing? Okay. Hey, if you are here for the first time or the third or fourth time, my name is Tobin.

[ 4 : 35 ] I'm one of the pastors here at Watermark Community Church. We have been on a journey following the clouds for places to meet as a congregation, as we got kicked out of Cyberport for the last couple weeks.

And so the cloud has landed on ISF here, and it is an amazing facility. So you want to, if you get a chance, thank the teachers and principals for allowing us to use this time here.

It's a great time here. We are continuing in our journey of Luke. We've been going through Luke for like two years. We'll probably go for Luke for another two years, which you laugh, but it's true.

And we are talking about lost and found things today. So actually, for the next four weeks, we're going to talk about lost and found things. And I'm going to do something that a man should never do.

There's a cardinal rule among husbands to never disclose secrets of husbands. But I know the husbands are getting nervous right now. But ladies, I need to tell you, as we talk about lost and found, whether you know it or not, your husbands are terrible primary caregivers.

[ 5 : 51 ] And your husband has probably lost your children and never told you this because he does not want you to freak out and never allow you to be or never allow you to have him have your kids with him again.

But that is true. It's a statement of fact. Husbands all know it. We hide it because we don't want our wives to think any less of us. The first time I lost my kid, we were in Bangkok.

And Christina, we had Rachel only one child now. We have four, which makes it easier to lose when you have four. And Rachel was under one years old. She was in a stroller, right?

And we went into this. So this is like I'm getting rid of my therapy because I'm sharing it right now for my wife who's never heard this story. So you're experiencing marital reconciliation too right here, which is really good, right?

And conflict resolution and communication. And I love you, honey. Anyway, so we had Rachel in her stroller. It was a blue McLaren stroller.

[ 6 : 56 ] And she was under one year old. And Christina wanted to go look at shoes, as all good wives do. They look at shoes whenever they go into department stores. And she kept Rachel with me. And she said, can you watch Rachel?

And I said, well, how hard can that be? Yes, she's a baby. She's strapped into a chair. No problem. I got this down. It's going to work perfectly. And so I did the thing that I normally do when I go to stores is I go to a book section or the newspaper section or the magazine section.

And so I pulled up to the magazine section. And I had the magazines in front of me. And I basically grabbed a couple magazines. And I put Rachel right here. And she's still in her chair, right? So that was my first mistake because I put her on my left side.

Now, if you don't know it, I'm deaf on my left side. I lost my hearing in college. We'll talk about that in another time. And so sometimes I read lips. And so if you talk to me on the left and I ignore you and you walk away and go, wow, what a snob.

It's not that. It's just I didn't hear you. But I read lips and I look at people. So even when you're in the audience and you say, well, I can't believe you said that. I understand what you're saying. Just to be aware of that.

[ 8 : 00 ] I'm learning Cantonese lip reading to be better. But I do English pretty well. And so I'm there reading magazines. And I look over the side. And Rachel's there.

And I'm reading magazines. I look over the side. Rachel's there. And I don't know how long it is. Surely less than two seconds, right? And I look over to the side. And Rachel is not there.

I mean, the stroller's there. But the baby isn't there. And so I look down and I look back. And I'm thinking, did Christina come by and get the kid? What happened to Rachel?

Why is she gone? And so you have one of these moments. His dad's like, oh, my wife is going to kill me. And how can I be so irresponsible? I had one goal just to watch this kid for however long to try on 200 pairs of shoes.

Anyway, so, which was very quick, I know. And so I panic. And I know I turn white.

[ 8 : 58 ] And I almost want to throw up, right? Because I'm like, okay, we're in Bangkok. I don't know anything. We're in this huge department store. And I can't speak Thai. And so I stand up. And I start looking around.

I kind of say, okay, hard search. And don't act like you've lost anything. Because if Christina sees you looking around like that, she's going to know you've lost something, right? And it's going to be the kid. So as a husband, you learn this way of kind of looking around and just kind of. And all of a sudden, I don't see anything. And I'm really starting to panic. And so I start kind of going around. And in my field of view, I can't see her. I see a lot of short little Thai people walking around. And no big white Caucasian baby anywhere. And all of a sudden, I hear this laughing. I hear this giggling and laughing. And it's coming behind the bookshelves. And so I run back there. And the Thai worker has this huge white kid in her arms. And she's walking around. And all the other Thai workers are, you know, hanging out with her and laughing and giggling. And, oh, look how big this foreign kid is.

[ 9 : 57 ] How did they get that big? I don't know. Look at the size of that head. And so I'm like, what are you doing? And she goes, she looked lonely. And I wanted to pick her up and just have fun with her.

And so I was like, oh, my gosh. I was like, okay, I can never tell Christina this because she will not trust me whatsoever, right? But then after you've had like your second, your third, or your fourth kid, losing kids is just different, right?

Because you have more of them, right? So we had this one kid. I don't want to. I have a sheep in my pocket, so I'm going to take them off here. We have this one kid. I don't want to name names, but it's the one kid in our family that has the XY chromosome.

And the XY chromosome kid, that's a boy, okay? So he's always getting lost, right? And always just getting lost.

And so last week he got lost after church, and we were walking down to the car, and Christina goes, well, where's the XY kid? And I'm like, Kip is lost.

[ 11 : 05 ] And she goes, well, what are we going to do? I'm like, just leave him here. He'll find his way home. I mean, if he got lost, he has to find his way back. He can do that. She goes, you can't be serious.

And in my mind, I'm like, okay, three out of four is 75%. 75% is pretty good, right? I mean, if you score football three times out of four, you get, you know, touchdown.

That's pretty good. But I'm not. I wasn't serious, okay? And so we end up looking for the kids. But sometimes losing things, why did I share that?

I don't know. But we're talking about lost and found things, and we're talking about how sometimes things stress us out and bother us.

And we're coming to a passage today, I think, that is the heart of the gospel. It's, I think, that it's the center of the Bible.

[ 12 : 02 ] We went through last week chapters 14, which is a really hard chapter. But chapter 15, it's who God is. It's the center of God's love for us.

I remember sharing with a Muslim guy in China, one of my students, and we were talking about God. And he said, what's God like to you? And I read the passage today to him.

And as I was sharing, he just kind of kept shaking his head. And he says, too good, too good, too good. I go, what do you mean? He goes, that's just too good.

I can't believe that God is like that. And so when we come to these passages that tell us what God is like, often, if you're like me, the first question I ask is, am I like that?

Because I'm a Christ follower. Am I like what God is like? Because God wants us to reflect him and to be like him, right? And so it's always a good thing to think about.

[ 13 : 04 ] But in Luke 15, verses 1 through 2, we're told that all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near to Christ to listen to him.

Remember what happened in the last verse of 14. It says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. Which basically means, hey, listen up, because something really important was just said and is about to be said.

And all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to him to listen to him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

And we see here in this big setting, in this beginning of this story, which we're going to cover for the next four weeks, that it all begins with a party. It begins with a meal.

And it's interesting because Jesus said, he who has ears, let him hear. And immediately, the worst people in their culture come and sit down and listen to him. It's not the leaders.

[14:01] It's not the powerful. It's not the rich. It's not the influential. But it's the worst people. And they come and they have a meal. And you have to realize in Hebrew culture that meals are very, very serious things.

They're incredibly important. They're symbols of friendship. They're symbols of community. They're symbols of forgiveness. They're symbols of identity.

And so Jesus isn't just eating with these sinful people, but he's developing relationships and community with them. And as the Pharisees look at it, they are appalled.

And the passage doesn't just say he joined them as he ate, because even a righteous Jewish person would often throw a party and invite a lot of poor people to it, but he would never attend it. He would just let them eat because he didn't want to soil himself with the poor people. But it says that Jesus actually hosted this party. He personally invited all of these people. He didn't just find them, but he brings them in there.

[15:07] And it's a big problem. The leaders look at this and they say, how can this be? When you look at somebody like a tax gatherer, and I know we have a couple tax people in here, but tax gatherers were the worst people in Jewish culture.

I mean, they were the scum of society. Cicero, an orator, a Roman guy, basically said that a tax collector was just like a prostitute. That a tax collector was somebody who basically bought a franchise to tax his own people from the Roman government.

So today we'd buy like a McDonald's franchise and make a lot of money. In Jesus' day, a guy, a Jewish guy, would buy a tax franchise from the Roman government, and he would make all of his money off of his own people.

And often he would make money because he would charge too much, or charge it more often than he should. And we're told in Hebrew culture that tax collectors and tax gatherers, that their reputation, their word in court was not allowable.

We're actually even told that if a tax collector came and offered money in the church, the rabbis would come and take it and throw it outside of the church. That he was so dirty and so disdained that they didn't even want his offering.

[16:25] And then the word sinner there is also very interesting. It means in Hebrew and Greek, people of the land. People of the land. It meant people who had given up on God.

It meant people that were Jewish and they were walking with him, and all of a sudden they became disinterested in him. And they didn't want to be with him anymore. And when the leaders looked at this, they couldn't understand what was going on.

They couldn't understand why Jesus would be interested in those type of people because no self-respecting person would ever hang around lost, broken, and sinful people. And Jesus is doing it.

And when we read verse 2, we realize that all of this begins, all of this dialogue begins because the Jewish guys, the leaders, they begin to grumble. And as they grumble, Jesus tells this story to them.

And it's important to remember that whenever Jesus tells a story, whenever you read a story in Hebrew culture, there's always an assumption that you're going to identify with one of the characters. That as you hear this story being played out, you're sitting in the audience and you're going, okay, which person is most like me?

[17:32] Okay, I'm probably more like that person. What do I learn from that person? What was that person like? What is God trying to teach me about that person? And so as Jesus tells these two parables and then the third one that we're going to cover in the next three weeks later, our hope is that you would listen to these parables and you would ask yourself the question, who am I?

Which person most relates to me? And as we look at this passage, I want to cover three things.

We're going to go through it quickly because we have an exercise at the end.

I want to look at sheep, lost things. I want to look at shepherds, people who find lost things. And I want to look at celebrations, what happens after we find lost things.

So sheep, shepherds, celebrations, lost things, people who find lost things. And what do we do after we find lost things? And in verse three and four, we read, and so then he tells them this parable saying, what man among you, if he had a hundred sheep and had lost one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?

Lost things. I wanted to bring a sheep in here today. But my wife said, that's not a good idea. Stink, make too much noise. I said, yeah, but we have four kids. We can just dress one of them up like a sheep and have them come in here.

[ 18 : 57 ] But instead, I brought this little sheep from our nativity scene. I have to make sure that I don't break it, but it's just this little sheep that I think will do well today. But you know, the interesting thing about sheep is that sheep are some of the dumbest animals in the world.

I mean, they are stupid. Growing up on a farm, I often would talk to ranchers, and on the ranches around us, they had cattle and sheep, and the ranchers would tell me that sheeps are one of the only symbiotic creatures that they know.

And what he meant by that is that they're one of the only animals on the ranch that cannot survive by itself. That the sheep needs the shepherd, the sheep needs the rancher, that if you put the sheep by itself, it will die.

It is totally symbiotic. It's totally dependent upon the shepherd to come through for it. Because if the shepherd doesn't come through for it, it's going to die. I mean, think about it. Sheep are white, and they graze on a green background.

I mean, they are helpless. They can't run. They can't fight. They can't bite. They can't climb. They can't dig. You're never going to see a football team ever in the whole world called the fighting sheep.

[ 20 : 08 ] You're never going to see a soccer team called the fluffy fighting sheep. Go sheep! Bah! But that just doesn't induce terror at all.

I mean, sheep are helpless. They only survive by the goodwill of the shepherd. Another thing that I learned about sheep is that sheep like to eat. Sheep like to eat and poop.

Eat, eat, eat, eat. That's all that sheep do. Sheep continually eat. In fact, sheep, if you watch them anywhere in the pastures, if you go with us to Israel this summer on May 16th when we do the trip, you're going to see sheep everywhere, and you're going to realize that sheep, all they do is they eat.

They follow the food. They go around, and they eat, and they eat, and they eat, and they eat until their stomachs are full, and they're satisfied. And sometimes I'm told that even sometimes if the sheep eats the wrong thing, they eat so much that their stomachs just blow up.

Like clover or things like that. And so they just continually eat. And as the sheep is eating, it's walking around, and all of a sudden it looks up, and it's lost.

[ 21 : 14 ] I mean, it followed its stomach to a place where it got separated from the crowd, and basically in fear we're told then that the sheep kind of walks around in a circle, bat, bat, bat, looks for somebody to come help it, somebody to save it.

It looks for the pack, and then the sheep just kind of lays down. Bat. Bat. Bat. And it just continues to cry out.

And what you realize as you study animals and sheep in Scripture is that sheep need to get rescued. Now, the Bible talks a lot about sheep. I mean, it talks over and over about sheep and shepherds.

I know this is going to offend some of us in here, but the Bible says that you and I spiritually are a lot like sheep. How do you feel about that?

The Scripture says that you and I feed on things that we think is going to satisfy our soul. That we walk through life, we walk through work, we walk through the journey that God has us on, and we eat, we eat, we eat, and we eat all these things that we think are going to satisfy us, that they're going to fill us up, that are going to make us whole, that are going to make us important, that we fill up on things like reputation, our family, our job, sometimes our spiritual accomplishments.

[ 22 : 44 ] And we keep chewing, and we keep chewing, and we keep eating, thinking that all of these things are going to satisfy us. What are you chewing on today?

What are you following? What are you munching on that you hope is going to satisfy you, that you hope is going to fill you up, that you hope is going to make you complete and whole, and that you're never going to have to eat again?

What is it? What is it? The rancher told me that eventually the sheep's appetite is a thing that gets them lost. They realize that they're lost, and they start to cry out, and in Montana when they cry out, this big wolf comes along, and the wolf says, hey, can I help you get back to the shepherds?

No, that's the revised version of it. That's the politically correct version of it. The wolf sees the sheep, and he thinks, pork chops, food. But the passage here, the bulletin here, what we've written down for you, it says that we all go off like sheep.

We all follow our appetites. We all follow something that we hope is going to give us fulfillment and happiness and satisfaction, and all that it does is it gets us lost.

[ 24 : 20 ] In fact, the scripture says that in this passage, the sheep and the coin, they don't even know that they're lost. They have no idea that they're lost. They have no idea where they are.

And this passage also tells us that the sheep and the coin can do nothing to fix a situation. The sheep can do nothing to fix its life.

How do you feel when you hear that? You know, when the Pharisees heard Jesus say that, they would have been incredibly, incredibly offended.

Because in Jesus' day, the religious people taught the people in the congregation to repent meant to work hard, to be good, to do all the right things.

And if you did all the right things, if you worked hard, if you were good enough, eventually you'd become one of the righteous ones. And so for 200 years, the rabbis taught that if you did these things, you would become one of the righteous ones.

[ 25 : 33 ] You wouldn't need forgiveness. You wouldn't need atonement. You'd be good enough. And so when Jesus told this story, he highly offended everybody who was listening.

Because they had their act together. They knew what to do. As I think about this story, you know, it probably offends a lot of people in Hong Kong too, doesn't it?

When you come to your friends and you share with them the truth of the gospel, and how the gospel says that Christ saves lost people, that there's nothing that you can do to un-lose yourself, that you, like a sheep, are totally helpless, that you, like a coin, are laying on the ground.

And when I've shared that with some people, sometimes in Hong Kong, I've actually had people spit on me before. Because they don't like hearing that. They don't like hearing that.

But Christianity says that you and I, we need a savior, we need a shepherd, sheep, lost, shepherds.

[ 26 : 46 ] Verses four and five, what man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and he has lost one of them, does he not leave the 99 in the open pasture and he goes after the one which is lost until he finds it?

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders. Now, we cannot understand this because in the context of what Jesus is saying, people, there would be so much emotion, just like the emotion I felt when I lost my kid in that department store.

As he's sharing it, everybody in the audience would have felt an incredible amount of emotion as you think of this pastor, this shepherd, going out and looking for sheep everywhere. The passage tells us that the minute the sheep was lost, the shepherd left.

I mean, he ran out immediately to find that sheep. The story tells us that the minute the woman realized that she lost the coin, she started tearing up things. Now, the coin is a very interesting story.

The coin that the woman wore was probably ten little silver coins and they represented her dowry. They represented her identity. They were something that even the tax collectors could not take away because it was so important in their culture.

[ 27 : 51 ] And when that woman lost that one coin, what most people would have assumed was that she was unfaithful. That she was unfaithful.

And so she was frantically looking for that one coin to put it back on her headdress before her husband returned. Because she didn't want to be shamed. She didn't want to be seen as somebody who was unfaithful.

And in this story, what you see is that both of these people, the shepherd, and this would have been very offensive also to the Pharisees, don't ever tell a story of a woman being the hero to a Jewish scribe because they think women are worthless.

Don't ever tell a story of a shepherd being a hero to a Jewish holy man because shepherds are dirty. But in this story, both of these people immediately get up and they expend huge amounts of energy.

I mean, the search isn't easy. They are tearing up things. They are relentless. They're frantic. They are both spending time and energy and things they probably don't have to spend.

[ 28 : 56 ] The shepherd goes out into the wilderness and he risks everything. He exposes himself to danger, to wild animals, to bandits, to sleepless nights.

He's risking everything for that sheep. And the passage says that he pursues it until he finds it. The word is when. It's not if he finds it.

It's when he finds it. The shepherd pays an incredibly high cost and he goes out and he searches for the sheep until he finds it. In our case, Jesus the shepherd gave everything.

When Christ came down from heaven, he gave up, set aside his glory, his position, his place. He was born in a manger which was filthy and dirty.

He laid aside all of these things that he was known for in heaven for eternity to come look for sheep. We're told that Jesus gave up everything for us.

[ 30 : 08 ] Have you ever thought about that? Jesus gave up everything for you. Maybe, sometimes I wake up in the morning and one of the exercises I get is I look myself in the mirror and I say, Jesus gave up everything for Tobin.

Maybe repeat that out loud. Don't say Tobin, though that's true, but yourself. Jesus gave up everything for, this is a classroom setting so when I say it, we'll repeat it, okay?

Jesus gave up everything. Jesus gave up everything for your name. Jesus gave up everything for Tobin.

How do you feel when you hear that? I mean, the scripture is really crazy here because he says, on one hand, you are a dumb, stupid sheep that follows your gut and your appetite and you get lost. Now, on the other hand, it says, you are so valuable. You are so special that God withheld nothing to find you.

[ 31 : 31 ] On one hand, we follow our appetites and we eat and we get lost. On the other hand, we're told that God gave up everything for us to bring us here.

You read the passage and it goes on and it says, not only did the shepherd find us, but it says that the shepherd put us on his shoulders and he carried us.

Think about that. When you look for sheep, sometimes the easy thing is finding them because they're green or they're white in a green field. But the hard thing is that the sheep, unlike a dog or whatever, you come up to and say, okay, come on.

Let's go. Time to go. The sheep is so fearful that it just lays there. It does nothing. And so the shepherd actually has to go down and he has to tie the legs of the sheep and he has to put the sheep over his neck so he has 50 or 70 pounds of sheep over his neck and he walks back to home, we're told in the scripture, and we realize that often finding the sheep is the easy thing, but bringing them back home is often very difficult.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. because you have kids that are lost. Some of you know what I'm talking about because you have a spouse who is lost.

[ 33 : 01 ] Some of you might know what I'm talking about because you're sitting in here going, I'm lost. But the passage says that Christ does everything, he gives everything, he pursues, he seeks us out until he finds us and not only does he do that, but he comes down, he picks us up as we were talking about earlier, he puts us over his shoulders and he walks with us all the way.

And the question we have to ask ourselves today guys is, do we trust him? Do we trust Jesus to carry us?

Do we trust him to carry us through our marriage? Do we trust him to get us married? Do we trust him to carry us through our work?

Do we trust him to carry us through parenting and parenthood? Do we trust him to carry us through life? And the passage says over and over again that Christ is good, he is the good shepherd that he comes alongside of us and that he finds us and he picks us up and that he carries us and he's good and that his arms are always on us.

It's not that our hands are always on Christ because they're not, but that our hands, his hands, are always holding us and guarding us. So we have sheep, lost things, we have shepherds, people who find lost things and finally we have celebrations and that's the easy part.

[ 34 : 40 ] Verses 5 and 7, then when he found it he laid it on his shoulders rejoicing and when he comes home he calls together his friends and his neighbors saying to him, rejoice with me for I found my sheep which is lost. I tell you in the same way that there'll be more joy in heaven over one

sinner who repents and over 99 righteous people who need no repentance.

And when the woman cleans out her house and she finds her coins and when she finds it, verse 9, she calls together her friends and her neighbors and she says, rejoice with me for I found the coin which I had lost.

In the same way I tell you in the presence of angels and of God there is so much joy over one sinner who repents. And the scripture here says that as God finds us, as God brings us back in heaven, there's this massive celebration.

that angels are screaming, that people are giving high fives, that everybody is out of control, and that heaven is a celebration. Now when you read the passage, you realize really quickly the Pharisees hated that.

The Pharisees don't like people coming to Christ. The Pharisees don't like joy. The Pharisees wanted honor. The Pharisees wanted special treatment.

[ 35 : 57 ] The Pharisees wanted to save their place. They wanted heaven only to be filled with special, important, significant people. In fact, the Pharisees majored their whole life on technicalities of the law.

And when they talked about the law and they talked about redemption, it was all about what you had to do, what you had to keep, and what you had to be. And they developed this whole system of spirituality so that when people walked into the church or they walked into the community group or they walked into wherever the leaders were meeting, immediately they weren't welcomed because they knew they were lost.

They knew that they were dirty. They knew that there was no way that they could come to Christ on their own because their heart was so lost.

You know, we're told that when Jesus says this in this story here, it's the first time in 200 years the people of God actually heard that God searches for lost people.

Up until that point, all the teachers taught that when the sheep got lost, the sheep was on his own because he put himself there and the sheep needs to get back, he needs to get his act together, he needs to be good, he needs to find his way back home.

[ 37 : 17 ] Because if he could find his way lost, he can find his way back home. But for the first time in history, Jesus says no.

Jesus says there's this huge, massive celebration because God has gone out and he's found the sheep and he's brought them back and the idea of joy is uncontrollable.

And so when we read it, we go, well, they're joyful, that's nice, they're happy, it's exciting, but the words are out of control joy. The words are excitement, the words are like when you find your lost child that you've been looking for for an hour or two hours.

The words are like when you found anything lost is significant and important and you found it, you're out of control and you're excited and you're rejoicing and you're celebrating. And so the passage here says that when Christ finds lost people, heaven erupts.

In fact, he says there's more joy out of one lost sinner coming to Christ than 99 righteous people who need no repentance. Let me ask you a question.

[ 38 : 26 ] Are there any righteous people who need no repentance? repentance? God's word says no.

But everybody that Jesus was talking to thought that they didn't need it. And the passage says here that everyone needs repentance, everyone needs to be reminded of what God has done in their life and that this idea of people coming to know Christ is out of control, it's a celebration, and sometimes I think in a church we miss it.

I miss it. Because I think about the things that bring me joy in my day. I'm joyful because I make my numbers. I'm joyful because I got a raise.

I'm joyful because my kids were finally obedient and they did well in their school. I'm joyful that this happened and this relationship was built but when I hear about someone coming to Christ, often I just kind of go, wow, that's really cool.

God's amazing. But the passage here says that when someone comes back to God, heaven erupts in joy and in happiness and celebration.

[ 39 : 49 ] And if that's what heaven is like, then we as a church need to think about how we can make earth like that also.

Sheep, lost things, sinners, I mean, shepherds who go after us and find us and bring us back in celebrations what it looks like. I want to end with a couple points and then we're going to do a little exercise for us because I think it's really important for us as a church, especially as we enter into our second year.

This is some thoughts I've been thinking. I'm just going to put them out there. This is not how you do a sermon, so I'll get critiqued later, but there are things that have been on my heart as I've been pondering and thinking through these things. I want to share this with you really quickly.

As we look at the story, the sheep and the coin in the story, it does nothing. It just gets lost. The action that the sheep and the coin does is it just gets lost and that getting lost is what causes the shepherd to leave everything to go after it.

The sheep doesn't earn the right to be saved. The sheep doesn't change its life. The sheep doesn't get its act together. People can't earn God's love and respect and sometimes we walk in world and we think, well, I've got to earn God's love and respect before he saves me and the passage says that's impossible.

[ 41 : 19 ] The story tells us that repentance is this. Repentance is being found by God in allowing him to find us.

There were 99 people that Jesus was talking to. Everybody there was lost. Only one person knew he was lost and he was willing to allow God to find him.

The 99 Pharisees didn't think that they were lost and so they said, well, I don't need to be found.

And the passage says here that repentance is being found by Christ in allowing him to find us.

The second thing that's been sticking in my head is that searching for lost people is really difficult.

Searching for people who don't want to know God, who are running away, can often be frustrating, hard, cause a lot of time, a lot of energy and sometimes we do it and we see very, very little result. It's much easier to start a new program or it's much easier to build a building or it's much easier to do something that we see physically happening but if we say we're here to reach out to lost people, that is very difficult and takes a lot of time.

[ 42 : 46 ] The passage tells us that Jesus who is our shepherd became a sheep so that we as his sheep can become shepherds to the people around us.

That's what this passage is all about. It's about God's joy in finding lost people and about us as sheep participating and joining with him.

When we started the church two years ago, we preached on Luke passage. We talked about Christ in a home and as he was there some men brought a stretcher and on this stretcher they brought their friend who needed desperately to meet Christ.

This friend desperately needed to meet Christ to be healed and so we went through the story and then we brought out this stretcher right there and over two years we've been signing names of people in our lives who are lost, who need to be found, people that we're committed to praying for.

The most amazing thing to me is sometimes when we see people come up here now and they come up with their friend and they see their name on there and they go is that my name? And the guy goes, yeah, I've been praying for you for two years.

[ 44 : 17 ] I'm going to pray for us and Katie's going to come up and in this process I want you to think about why God has you here at this church.

We talk about it all the time. We talk about if you're here just to get your needs met and not to be a part of the journey. There's probably other churches that you're going to be more comfortable at because we want the people, the family members of Watermark to know that the journey is all about being used by our shepherd to pray and to reach out for people around us.

And so as Katie comes we would ask for you in an attitude of prayer and silence if God puts people on your heart to come up the elders are going to bring it down here right in front we'll have some markers and we would ask for you just to sign their name and that's a step of faith for us and what it means is you're committed to pray for those people that you're committed to be a shepherd to those people you're committed to go out to those people and to show them Jesus and allow the good shepherd to bring them back to the family sheep lost things shepherds people who search for lost things celebrations what we do when we find lost things father we just come to you today and we thank you for your goodness and mercy in our life as we look at these stories and we consider what you did for us

I can't even begin to imagine or comprehend all that you've done to bring me back to you when I say the words that you gave up everything to bring Tobin into the family that is yeah I cry and that's

why I cry so Lord we come before you as a church right now and we just confess our hearts to you we know that there's some of us in here who probably have the attitude that I have or I have occasionally and I often do I have four kids you know three is pretty good and if that kid got lost well they can find their way back and I don't need to do anything about it so father I just confess that to you father I just apologize for not seeing your heart seeing how you see lost people and what I pray for this church our church I confess for our church as leaders

Lord help us never to just come and to participate and to leave and not allow it to change us and to realize that your heart is for people who are wandering in darkness and they need to know your son Jesus so Lord we repent and we need you Lord I pray for some of us in here right now who hear this message and they realize that they're the lost sheep and if they're like me they're busy trying to get in shape and get their life together before they are presentable to you and Lord I pray that through these words and through the message they'd realize that there's nothing they can do to make them more beautiful and expensive and costly to you because you've already done that when you gave your son Jesus for them so Lord I pray for any of us here who are struggling to get our life right and perfect so that we can please you that we come before you this morning to surrender that and realize as a good shepherd that you've sought us and you've got us and you've put us on your shoulders and you've promised to never let go of us and to bring us home so Father we come before you and we pray also for this city of

[ 48 : 23 ] Hong Kong what an amazing city where 95% of the people walk in darkness who are busy chewing whatever they feel like is going to give them satisfaction and hope and meaning as they go on this journey where we pray that you would use us as a church to be beside them when they wake up and they realize that they're lost that you would use us as hands and feet and money and whatever else that we have as your stewards to bring them back to your family so Lord we dedicate these names on this stretch right now and we pray that you would change their lives we know that repentance is being found by you and them accepting it and so we pray for these hundreds of people Lord that you would do a mighty work in their life we love you we pray these things in your son Jesus name amen amen sheep more valuable and precious to God the creator of all universe than ever you can imagine my prayer is that you would leave here realizing that's how

God sees you that's how he sees the people you walk with every day and he's put you in a place to be a shepherd to point them to your son Jesus if you need anybody to pray with you please don't leave here before you let that happen we have people who are trained on our prayer team they'll be up here if you're new please come introduce yourself to the leaders I would love to meet you and just hear a little bit of your story of what you're doing here and how God has brought you to the church here next week we are at cyberport so some people have said they go on the website they don't know where we meet it's in the big banner always in the center it flashes sometimes there's two banners sometimes there's three but it's always there we'll tell where we meet and on the top right hand corner there's always where we meet also and so God has us wandering around for a while which seems like that's what life is like in Hong Kong isn't it so hopefully we will see you back there at cyberport next week also we're going into to become enter into that class and be a part of that hey

Catherine how are you doing and so there's a sign up on the table back there on the back so please sign up for the baptism class and also we don't pass around offerings here you probably think it's kind of weird and we don't even have the kiosk that we normally have at cyberport but we do feel like that what you give to the Lord as an offering is an indication of your understanding of what he's done in your life and so we would ask for you as you contemplate how Christ has brought you back and what that means to you that you would give of those finances that he's given you appropriately and that allows us to do what we do as we reach out as a church and minister to this part of Hong and beyond how you guys doing it was really quiet Enrica how are you you back from Denmark Holland okay it's good to see you how long are you back okay let me pray for us father we just thank you for this day we thank you yeah

Lord we come to passages like today and even contextually sometimes we have a hard time relating to sheep and what it looks like in our family so Lord we come to you this morning and we just worship you and we thank you for your amazing grace and goodness to us to us your dumb sheep and we thank you that you are always having your hands upon us and you are carrying us and there is never a moment in our life when we need to give up hope but we realize that he who has all hope we just come before you and we worship you again and we thank you that you brought

us to this place to worship as a family we thank you that you continue to provide places for us every week and we just lift up those needs to you and we pray for this part of Hong Hong Hong Hong that you would change it that your spirit would move that people's eyes would be open to your son Jesus that they would fall in love with him and they would come into your family and heaven would rejoice we thank you for allowing us to be a part of that as a church Lord we love you and we pray all these things in your son Jesus holy name amen God bless you have a great week and we'll see you next Sunday at Cyberport