

A Look at the Father's Heart

Imagine you're in an unfamiliar place – and you're lost. It can be frustrating and scary. That's what life is like for millions of people. They're lost. Some know they're lost – feel frustrated & scared. Others would take offense if you hinted they didn't know. When we look at Jesus it is easy to see he *cared* for the lost. He mingled with people who needed His salvation, who were desperate for His grace/mercy. Jesus has asked us to do what He did. If you've ever been lost, you know what a relief it is when someone stops to offer directions.

I. Evangelism becomes natural when we grow to be like Jesus.

- A. God wants evangelism to come from within because our hearts are taking on the character of Jesus. **God doesn't want pressured performance.**
- B. Evangelism motivated by a pep talk or nagging guilt will not be successful.

II. A look at Luke 15.

- A. Lk. 15:1 – tax collectors/sinners came near to *listen to Him*.
 - 1. 15:2 – *receives* from Gk WD meaning “to receive as a friend.”
- B. 15:2 – Pharisees believed some people weren't worth the time to save.

III. How far is God willing to go?

- A. The 3 stories in Lk. 15 tell us just how far God will go & why.
- B. Lk. 15:3, 5 – God is willing to go to extreme efforts to save the lost.
 - 1. God has always made great effort.
 - a) Isa. 53:6 – God views us as lost sheep.
 - b) Ezek. 34:11-31 (11-16, 31) w/Israel.
 - c) Jhn 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10 w/all men.
 - d) 2 Pet. 3:9 – God wills that none perish.
 - 2. Lk. 15:4, 8 – that which was lost was sought after with great effort.
 - a) We should view reaching the lost in the same way.
 - 3. What effort can we make?
 - a) Significant #'s of prayers should be for the lost.
 - b) Use our resources & talents to get the word out that this is a place of healing.
- C. Lk. 15:3, 5 – God is persistent in seeking those who are lost.
 - 1. Persistence is a needed quality for success.
 - a) It is not easy to reach people's hearts so they receive Jesus.
 - 2. People spiritually lost are too valuable to give up on.
 - 3. God is always there. Rev. 3:20 - Is He knocking on the door of your heart?

IV. God will do whatever necessary to find that which is lost.

- A. Each parable in Lk 15 is slightly different.
 - 1. Each parable tells a story of items with increasing value.
 - 2. God will do whatever to find the lost! Lk. 12:6-7
- B. Prodigal Son – story just a little different. Lk. 15:14-24
 - 1. Until the son decided he was going to return he was still lost.
 - a) Father had to wait until lost son wanted to come home.
 - 2. As much as the father wanted his son to return...he still had to wait till his boy made the decision to return.

Conclusion:

- A. I hope we've all be able to see the Father's heart. As we grow up in Christ & become imitators of God, we will begin to view the world the way He does.
- B. You are so important to God that He is looking for you!
- C. Maybe that fact has become real to you today.
 - 1. Your father is anxiously waiting for you to respond.