**9/14/25**

**Recovery**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 15:1-10 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Believe it or not today was actually one of those days during the church year that I had an option of what the readings were going to be. I actually had the opportunity to pick what the direction and focus of our time together would be. Yes, I know some of you may or may not realize that today is also known as Holy Cross Day in the church’s calendar. With that being said, trust me I debated switching to the alternative readings for this Sunday more than once. Especially with some of the stuff that is going on in the news and our world right now, and even what happened 24 years ago during 9/11. So, as I began my research and my discernment I read some commentaries, I asked a few other colleagues about things and what they were doing, and I even read a sermon from a colleague who posted early. Although, regardless of their direction and thought I chose to stick with today’s texts from the 14th Sunday after Pentecost. That was not because I was trying to be difficult or different, it was just because I felt that they were the ones calling to me at this time and place. The focus and these parables in this Gospel Reading were the ones I thought we all might need to dig into just a little more together here today.

Now, what I often come to realize, and I hope you do as well, is that the very harsh reality is that it is not our job to be of this world. It is so easy to get caught up in all that is or has gone on, and even get caught up in all the feelings and the displays going on now, and even thinking back to 24 years ago following 9/11. However, I need to remind my self often that it is our job to actually quiet all of that noise going on out there and refocus, recenter, or **Recover** our sense of peace. Unfortunately, it is all too often that we happen to be reactive instead of counter-active. However, if we slow down and breathe and maybe even count to ten, if we truly analyze things and ask for the Spirit to intercede, then we come to realize that Jesus calls us to his very life and actions. Being Christlike is living out the call on our lives to actually be counter-cultural instead and rejoice in **Recovery**. The very **Recovery** of our hearts and souls to the message and the purpose that should always guide us and our actions towards and for our neighbor as well.

So, you may be sitting there in your pews or on the conference call and wondering where I might be going in all of this. Of course, you heard or read the very same stories that I did in today’s Gospel Reading. To top it off, I am sure that you all are rather familiar with those stories as well. So, maybe you are wondering how I may precisely go about putting a different spin or light on these while linking them together somehow. Then again, you may be thinking I am avoiding what is going on out there in the world and in the news for some reason. No matter what you may be thinking or perceiving this is where I invite you to buckle up and tune in. This is also where I thank you for allowing me to research things in a different way, and explore them alternatively with you and for myself as well. It is my hope we all will get something out of this message and be fed here this morning before we even make it over to coffee hour.

So, we come to realize all too often that there really is no other place than in the Bible and in two parables that a lost sheep and a lost coin might actually relate somehow. Let alone their finding or **Recovery** actually leads to a rejoicing that relates as well. There is no mistake that the word **Recovery** appears in our brief explanation of the Gospel text here today. There is no mistake that I have thrown that term in several times already as well. For **Recovery** is a deep word with many meanings or actions behind it, and the very use of the term **Recovery** means a lot in our context together here today and back in Jesus’ time as well. So, let’s really break this down together.

**Recovery** here in the essence or place of these two similar but same stories leads to choices and actions that believe it or not may actually yield nothing. There is a chance that the shepherd goes running out into the plains and fields, into the mountains and trails, into the world searching high and low to find nothing. That is because the predators may have found the sheep first, or then again just maybe the shepherd just simply went the alternative way than the sheep actually wandered off in. Secondly, there is a chance that the woman utilizes oil to light her lamp, that she sweeps the dirty and dusty floors, and that she also searches high and low to find nothing. The coin may just simply not come back into plain sight, and then again maybe she swept over it and even covered it with more dirt or actually pushed it and caused it to be further out of sight. Regardless; effort, time, resources, trust, and hope have all been front and center in both of these stories. We may have thought to ourselves a time or two that we should just rejoice in the 99 or the 9 that we still have. However, the **Recovery** is what it is all about here folks! Why that would be so is almost completely ridiculous. Why that would be so is almost completely foreign to normal thought or process. Why that would be so is indeed counter-cultural to everything and everyone else.

These stories speak in so many different ways and intensities. It was meant to be heard by a grumbling group of folks back then, through the years, and here and now as we may have never considered these actions or mindset. It was meant for all of us to ponder as we happen to grumble about at times during the day as well, or even in times of searching and seeking, finding or not finding. Regardless, our mindsets are to expand here because Jesus is calling us to something holy and entirely different.

Let’s put things into a little more common or relatable perspective together here. The lost and found is not just typically a bin or some place for located items to never be **Recovered**. The lost and found is a location where people come and seek out something that was important to them. The lost and found is a location where hope and expectation are often met. The lost and found is a place where we are often reconnected with something that we accidentally left behind or even misplaced. The lost and found allows us to rejoice in **Recovery**! We do not go to the bin or call into the location we left something with no hope of someone else locating it and turning it in. We do not go to the bin or call into the location we left something if we really had no intent of **Recovering** what was lost or misplaced. We do not go to the bin or call into the location we left something if we had no intent to rejoice and be thankful. We have hope, we have desire, we wish to be blessed or reconnected with that item or thing.

So, why is the context or the occurrence of what happened in today’s parables any different? Is it because we struggle with putting them into a context of our time and place now? Is it because we have minimized **Recovery** or rejoicing? Then again, is it because we never expected it to be found, or we never actually expected to be the lost ones ourselves?

Yes, I know that last question is deep. Maybe even deeper than any single one of us wants to admit at times. We have all been lost a time or two, and if we all are honest, way more than that, sometimes even in one single day. We all have been lost whether it be close or far off, whether in plain sight or hidden in a valley. We have all been lost and have been hopeful that someone would even realize it amidst their own lives and their own distractions. We all have been lost and have been hopeful that someone would care enough to call, text, email, send a card in the mail, or even knock on our door and let us know that they cared. We all have been lost to the extent that we need Christ in our neighbor to help search for and locate us. We have also been called to the very same alternative actions and measures in the effort of **Recovering** lost souls for the kingdom, for the eternal life that we all desire to rejoice in and live together with one another in as well.

However, what we come to realize is that in any and all actions, in any and all times of being lost, in any and all places our Triune God is the one constantly pursuing and calling us. We have a God that loves on everyone, that cares for everyone, that desires our very relationship and presence that he never gives up on us. Despite all of our mistakes or our shortcomings, despite how many times we wander off from the fold or fall out of the coin purse, and despite how many times we get angry or even question what has happened or what is going on. No matter what we are constantly being sought out and pursued. Yes, that may even sound creepy at times. Yet, thank goodness that we have a God that actually desires for and of us so much that there is no stopping or completion of the search. There is a continual calling out and seeking that are like no other, and no matter how many times we apologize, repent, or admit to being lost our Triune God is right there to swipe us up yet again and invite everyone to rejoice that we have been **Recovered**! We are not an insignificant sheep that has wandered off, nor are we a small coin that has been dropped on the floor and lost, we are the very object and desire of God’s eye for we are God’s divine creation!

The world out there can be very scary, disheartening, and even misleading at times. The world out there requires us to make several decisions during the course of every single day that may affect the lives and faith of ourselves and others in a direct or indirect way. However, what the world out there does not always seem to be asking or focused on enough is if we are truly ready and willing to admit defeat and constantly be **Recovered** by our loving God. Let us rejoice in what our Triune God does and calls us to every single day, and that is a life of repentance and **Recovery** time and time again.

**Amen****.**

**Luke 15:1-10 (NRSVUE)**

 Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being

 found and sinners repenting. God takes the initiative to find sinners, each of

 whom is so precious to God that their recovery brings joy in heaven.

 1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.]

 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow

 welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

 3 So he told them this parable: 4 “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and

 losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after

 the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his

 shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends

 and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’

 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

 than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

 8 “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light

 a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she

 has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with

 me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy in

 the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 September 14th, 2025

 14th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 God celebrates finding the lost, without restraint

 September 14, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 15:1-10

 E. Trey Clark

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Luke 15 begins with the ever-present concern for the company one keeps.

 September 15, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 15:1-10

 Amanda Brobst-Renaud

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 While the return of sheep to the community is welcome, it also creates the possibility

 of resentment and conflict

 September 11, 2022

 Commentary on Luke 15:1-10

 Kendra A. Mohn