

SERMON NOTES Sunday 15th September 2019

sunnysidechurch

Theme: The God who seeks

Main passage: **Luke 15.1-10**

Additional passages: **1 Timothy 1.12-17**

Some of the major points made during the sermon:

Not just a warm-up act

There are three 'lost and found' stories in Luke 15; the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost (prodigal) son. Though the story of the lost son is the most well-loved and richly textured of the three, each makes its own contribution to our understanding of what God is like. The context for the three stories is the muttering of the 'Pharisees and teachers of the law' about Jesus welcoming sinners and eating with them. (v2)

The sheep, the coin and the seeker

The focus in the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep is very much on the seeker; the shepherd and the woman. They both went to enormous lengths to find what was lost and had a party when it was safely found (v3-6). In the same way, Jesus sought out 'sinners', the parables paint a picture of a God who seeks us out.

A history of seeking (and partying)

God is a God who seeks people out. Think of Moses, Abraham, Isaiah, Mary. Jesus sought out his disciples. He also told his disciples to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28.19). God is not passive. He seeks us out and recruits us to be his seekers.

The ninety-nine - Do we want to be found?

I think Jesus may well have had a smile on his face when he referred to the 99 'righteous people who do not need to repent' (v7). The whole of creation needs to be restored and made new. However there are some, like the Pharisees and teachers of the law, who think that they have no need of God's healing and forgiveness. They don't want to be found.

Letting God be God

What is our role as Jesus's people in response to this?

- Always remembering that we were lost until Jesus found us
- Joining Jesus in seeking out the people who are lost

- Offering them the hope that Jesus's resurrection brings to all people
- Living as people who know they are loved and forgiven

Some questions for reflection and discussion

- ① **Can you remember when you were first aware of being 'found' by God? What does being 'found' by God mean to you?**
- ② **Think about people you know who have yet to be found by God. Do you know why they might be lost? Do they know that they are lost? Do they want to be found?**
- ③ **What things get in the way of people being found by God? Are there things we can do to break down the barriers that prevent people from responding to God's love and the hope that it brings.**
- ④ **Thinking particularly of the communities that we move among, how can we bring Jesus alive to people who do not know him?**
- ⑤ **Are there any other issues that the sermon raised for you?**

Quote of the week

From 'God with us' by Rowan Williams

' wherever we go, with the biblical story in our hands and with the vision of Jesus in our eyes, there is an expectation that human beings will resonate with what's being spoken of. They may not know quite how they do it or why, and they may not do it in the ways or at the times or in the contexts where we'd like them to. But we go on in mission, because of that conviction that there is such a thing as the human heart and human destiny and thus that these words will find an echo.

'You understand more fully who Jesus is the more people you try and share him with. Because people recognise him, though they come from wildly diverse backgrounds, though their humanity is diverse; they recognise the humanity they share with him and so open up their own humanity to God.'