

# God Seeks, and Delights in Finding

by Daniel Kenaston

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*This sermon emphasizes God's seeking love as portrayed in Luke chapter 15, highlighting the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. It challenges believers to reflect the seeking heart of the Father by reaching out to the lost with love and compassion, not compromising holiness but drawing sinners near through genuine care. The message encourages a proactive approach to missions and evangelism, reminding listeners of the immense joy in heaven when the lost are found.*

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**Scripture:** Luke 15:1, Matthew 18:12, 1 Peter 3:9, Matthew 28:19, Romans 10:14

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## Description

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## Transcript

Good afternoon to all of you. And thank you for being here and focusing on our theme. That is God's seeking love.

I think sometimes we may have a disadvantage when we're only surrounded by other believers. We may not sometimes recognize the tremendous truth that our Father is a seeking Father. That the love of the Lord Jesus looks for the lost.

I was meditating on it maybe two weeks ago. I was teaching a Bible school to a group of young church leaders there in Tamale and communicating with them along this same line. And our context there in Tamale is that we're surrounded by Muslims.

And the answer that Islam has for the sin of mankind is that man is sinful and therefore man should prostrate himself before Allah. And I thought about that. I thought about the prophets of Baal and the picture of the prophets, 450 prophets of Baal climbing on the altar, cutting themselves, calling out, shouting for Baal to hear them.

Both of these pictures show human beings attempting to reach out to their God or their great other one or their power beyond themselves. But the picture that we have in the Lord Jesus is of a God who seeks. And

so our theme here this conference is God's seeking love.

I'd like for us to turn to Luke chapter 15. We are only going to be in Luke 15 this afternoon and try to look a little bit at God's heart as presented in this chapter. Thank you for making the effort to be here.

Some of you have traveled a long distance. Some of you are local, but I'm happy to be here and to share. If you were not here for the first two evenings, Thursday and Friday evening, I would highly recommend Brother Rick Rhoad's messages.

I just keep going over and over in my mind the little question and answer that he had back and forth with us last night. Who is the light? We are the light. What do we do with light? We take it to dark places.

And I think what I'd like to share fits very much along with that theme. We are in the book of Luke chapter 15 and verse one. Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And before we go further into the message, I'd just like us to stop because these two verses tell us a little bit of a story. They're meant to paint a picture for us and I don't want us to rush into the parables which we're familiar with.

I want us to see the backdrop of what is being communicated here. We have the son of our father. We have the son of God, the Lord Jesus, here on this earth walking through his earthly ministry.

And Jesus was the pure son of God. He was the epitome of holiness. There was nothing sinful about him.

And yet there was some kind of a quality about the Lord Jesus life that let the publicans and sinners, the offcasts, those who were not popular, who were definitely not of the religious class, those who didn't hold themselves to be holy or special, somehow those people were comfortable crowding around Jesus. Definitely the life of Christ represents what we do with the light is take it to dark places. And so here the Lord Jesus is interacting.

There's a large crowd of people there and those who are crowding around closely to him are the publicans and sinners because they wanted to hear him. And then we have sort of three classes of people. Here we have the son of God in his perfect holiness.

We have the publicans and sinners who are drawing near because they want to hear him. And then we have the scribes and Pharisees who are standing a little bit at a distance, both spiritually and physically, standing a bit at a distance and looking on at the crowd of people that is surrounding our Lord Jesus. And they're murmuring and they're saying, this man welcomes sinners.

Let me ad-lib a little bit for you. What is wrong with this holy man that all of these sinners wanna be around him? Don't you think, scribe, don't you think, Pharisee, that the fact that this man is so comfortable relating to sinners says something bad about the character of this so-called holy man? Why is it that this man is so comfortable receiving sinners? I'd like to suggest to you that there's a pretty profound difference in the worldview here of the holiness of the Lord Jesus and the holiness, if you will, of the scribes and Pharisees who were known for living set-apart lives, but who had a really difficult time interacting with the needy, sinful people who probably really needed their message of holiness. And then on the other side here, we have the Lord Jesus who was so much holier than the scribes and Pharisees could have ever been, and yet was entirely comfortable reaching out to the sinners.

In fact, not just that Jesus was comfortable, they were comfortable. Here, finally, was a super holy man that they wanted to be near. And you just see this picture.

I hope you can picture in your mind the Lord Jesus and these sinful people drawing near, drawn by his holiness, drawn by his welcome, drawn by his message. And there's the scribes and Pharisees saying, oh, this holy man, hmm, he welcomes sinners. And we could go through many other portions of Scripture where the same sort of comparison between the Lord Jesus with his outreaching love and the scribes and Pharisees with their standoffish holiness are juxtaposed in Scripture.

We'd be many other places. I just want to stay in this chapter. But we see these two differences.

And Jesus, in an effort to explain to the scribes and Pharisees the reason why he is the way he is, he describes why he's comfortable with these sinners by telling three stories. Jesus rarely said, okay, I'm gonna teach you something. Jesus just naturally switches into a story, which must be, as Brother Rick Rhodes said, part of our Father, who's an excellent communicator.

Jesus just switches into a story and says, okay, I heard your comment. How about we look at a story? And I'd like us to briefly look through these three parables this afternoon and see our God's heart, the heart of our Father, who seeks and delights in finding the lost. Verse three, and he spake this parable unto them, saying, what man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors and says unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep, which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise, joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Let's just keep reading.

We're gonna come back and draw some commonalities between all three of these. Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, rejoice with me, for I have found the peace which I had lost.

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Two stories, one out of 100 sheep missing, one out of 10 coins missing. And then the third story, one out of two sons missing.

And I recognize that we're familiar with the rest of this chapter being referred to as the story of the prodigal son. But I'd like to suggest to you that it's also the story of the longing, seeking heart of the father. And in the context of these parables and what Jesus was trying to school the publicans, I'm sorry, the scribes and Pharisees on, it appears that the focus is the father's heart.

We'll read rapidly here. And he said, a certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And when he fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose and came to his father. Even before the prodigal son arrives back home, there is an awareness while he is feeding scraps to the pigs and looking on longingly that just to have a portion of the slop bucket for himself, even in that period, he is aware of his father's heart enough that he says, I'm gonna go back to my father, and I'm gonna go back and apologize to my father and tell my father, just make me one of the servants. That prodigal son knew something about the nature of his father, or he would have decided to go anywhere else except home to his father.

Who had he wronged more than anyone else? His father. You'd think, well, you can go start over in any city you want to, but why would you go back to the man that you've hurt more than anyone else? He said, I'm gonna go back to my father and just tell my father, just make me one of your hired servants. It is because of the seeking heart of our father that even you and I are willing and ready to go back because we know his heart.

But the Bible tells us, verse 20, he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said, father, I've sinned against thee and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.

And they began to be merry. We'll just stop reading there. We'll look briefly at the end, at the attitude of the brother.

But for now, let's just focus on these three stories and what they show us of our father's seeking heart. God seeks and delights in finding. Each one of these three parables or stories that are told have some commonalities.

Number one, that in each one, there is searching for the one who's missing. In one story, it's one coin out of 10 or one sheep out of 100 or one son out of two. And it really doesn't matter in the heart of our father whether it's one out of 100 or one out of two.

The point is that someone is lost. And Jesus is using these three parables to try to communicate to the scribes and Pharisees who were standing there trying to understand why Jesus was comfortable interacting with the sinners. He says, well, I'm looking for the lost ones.

Why wouldn't I be spending my time comfortable with the sinners? I'm looking for the lost ones. In all three of these stories, there is the common element of something being lost. And I think we need to recognize as a theological foundation that mankind is lost from the original created relationship that God intended.

Man was created to fellowship and worship with his creator. And so every one of us who is not with the Lord Jesus, everyone who has not been saved and is not walking with God is lost. And so Jesus puts a great number of people within that category of lost.

But he says, I'm here for the lost. And that doesn't really matter whether it's one out of two, if it's 50% or it's 1%, one out of 100, the focus is something that is supposed to be here with me has been lost, and I'm gonna find it. Our God seeks and delights in the finding.

There's also a commonality in that there's focus and effort placed on the one that's missing. The 99 sheep, Jesus says, don't you leave the 99 sheep? Don't you put them in their corral or their paddock and then go out to look for the one? If it's the coins, don't you light a candle and start spring cleaning? Because I have to find 10% of my savings which I've lost. I have to find the coin.

And so there's an effort placed on the one that's missing. For the father of the prodigal son, you may not have the active effort of roaming through the wilderness looking for the sheep or sweeping under the bed looking for the coin, but the father of the prodigal son is there waiting for his son to return. So it's not really so much the story of the prodigal son as it is the loving heart of the father who's there.

I don't know how long it took for the prodigal son to spend all of that money, but it probably wasn't a weekend. It sounds like it was a significant amount of money. Even if he lived a life of terrible sin, it might have been months, it might have been years, it could have been even longer than that depending on how much money it was and how expensive it was to get drunk and gamble and whatever else the son did.

His father said, my son was dead, my son was lost. And that day when the son came home, his father was waiting for him. In my heart, I believe firmly that that father had waited for that son many, many days.

There must have been a ridge, there must have been a high point just down from the family house where the father would go and stand and he could watch the trail or the road coming out from the town and he knew that's the road my son will come down. But in all three of these, there is the heart of someone looking for the lost. In all three, there's the element of, quote, leaving those who've already been found.

The 99 sheep get tied up in the corral while the shepherd goes out to look for the one. Those nine coins get left in the coin purse while we turn the house inside out to find the one that's missing. The son who was still at home responds with real jealousy because he's been there with his father and he feels like I'm safely here with you and you're not making a big deal over me.

All three of these stories, there is a pursuing of the one that's lost while those that are already found are just found. In all three of these parables, there is joy in the lost being found. The Lord Jesus is trying to communicate his heart and the heart of our father when he says, let me tell you, Pharisees, scribes, there's joy in heaven.

Let me tell you what brings joy to the heart of your father. The angels who live in his presence and who reflect his glory and his emotions, there's joy over one sinner that repents. Even more, he says, than over the 99 righteous who don't need any repentance.

And so we see the heart of our father who seeks and looks for those who are lost. Remember that Jesus is trying to give a picture to the Pharisees of how different his heart was towards the needy that were around him. Jesus saw an opportunity in the fact that here are the sinners coming close to Jesus, wanting to hear him.

The heart of the Lord Jesus is saying, out of this group of sinners, there are people who are lost. How can I find them? And the Pharisees are saying, hmm, how can a man this holy be comfortable in proximity with this many sinful people? Our father seeks and delights in finding. Two little stories before we move on.

Last week, I was teaching Bible school to a group of our church leaders, and my topic was trying to communicate the importance in the heart of God, the heart of God for missions. And these are men who are just born again. They are still the mission field, but we're trying to communicate to them that at some point, they need to pick up a vision to start reaching the tribes that are around them, because if it's incumbent upon charity Christian fellowship all the way over in America to send missionaries to the tribes of Ghana, it's also much more incumbent upon the African church to emerge and be strong enough to start reaching out.

So as part of that effort, I told the story of how the gospel came to Ghana. And most of these men have no context whatsoever for church history. So we just told the story.

This is the first missionaries that came and landed on the Gold Coast in the 1800s. And out of the first six that went, five of them were dead within four months. And then they sent down a doctor to treat the sick ones, and the doctor died within a year.

And then the mission sent eight more to replace the four that had died. And out of those eight, only two survived the first year. And I just laid out this story.

In the first, I believe, 75 years of missions in Ghana, there were about 150 missionaries who died. They died from a sickness that they mistakenly called malaria, means bad air, which has nothing whatsoever to do with the way malaria actually passes. But they didn't have any medicine for it.

They didn't know what the cause was. They just died. And these young church leaders sat there with their mouths open.

That's how the gospel came to this country? Wow. I said, yes. I said, it's like you've been drinking from a well, a hand-dug well that your grandfather spent months to dig, and you've been drinking from it every day, but you never asked your grandfather what kind of effort went in to digging that well.

This is the history of the Church of Jesus Christ in Ghana. People died. And I tried to highlight it for them.

I mean, can you imagine being the home church in England and in Switzerland, I believe, were those first two countries to send missionaries to Ghana? Can you imagine when the letters got back and the mission leaders had to stand up and say, remember those four people we had that special service for? They made it safely to Ghana. It took them months on the boat. But unfortunately, all of them died within the first year.

We're looking for eight more people to go and replace those four. Think missions recruitment is a challenge in the modern day? Yeah, it is. It's hard to recruit long-term missionaries.

It is. Imagine standing up and saying, all those we sent the last time are dead. Imagine the mothers saying goodbye to their sons when everybody who's gone before has died.

Well, partially, that's a testament to the commitment of the church in missions. But you know what it is even more than that? It's a testimony to the seeking heart of our Father who motivates a church to a point that says, we're going to send our young men to Africa even though most of them will die. Yes, kudos to those British and Swiss churches.

But even more than that, glory to God for the seeking heart of our Father who loves with such intensity that he says, it's fine for these young men to go and die in the effort. And it's okay that 150 missionaries will die

to plant the church. And I'm not talking about the whole of Africa.

I'm talking about the one medium-sized African country that I live in. People talk about military endeavors. Is it worth our sons going over there and dying? I'm not sure if I'm willing for my son to die for that cause.

Our Father said, I'm willing for my sons, my sons and daughters, my believers, my church members, I'm willing for them to die because I want to save. I want to seek out the lost. And these men sat there and just their mouths open.

Said, yeah, that's your history. That's the history of the Church of Jesus Christ in Ghana. Our Father seeks, it matters to him because he does not consider it to be a waste when people die and are buried.

He doesn't consider it a waste because the lost are being found. Another little story. This weekend, my wife is hosting a single missionary from Canada who's staying with us in Tamale for a little getaway and some encouragement.

A single missionary, female missionary from Canada. She came to Ghana as an atheist volunteer. Europeans, Canadians and Americans, but Europeans even more than Americans volunteer.

They go over to Africa and do these programs, anti-AIDS or educational programs or reforestry programs. And she came to Ghana as an atheist to do her bit for mankind and work for a non-governmental organization. God placed her in a Konkomba village, okay? Those of you who live here in Pennsylvania, I know that's my tribe.

That's the tribe that God sent me to. God placed her in a Konkomba village with a pastor, not in my area, down south. And this Konkomba pastor led this Canadian volunteer to Christ.

My heart just says, wow. I mean, somebody said, wow. We should all say, wow.

God brought an atheist Canadian volunteer to help out in Africa, you know, backward Africa. We need to do a lot of development. And places her in a community where there is a Konkomba who would have been led to Christ by missionaries from the United States probably.

Put her in a community where there's a Konkomba pastor who leads this Canadian volunteer to Christ. She went back to Canada, went to Bible school and came back to serve in Ghana as a missionary. Wow.

But that's the story of our father who seeks and delights in finding. Yes, right now missionaries going to Africa. Sometimes the churches that have been planted by missionaries reaching out to others.

And then these bizarre situations like a Konkomba pastor who leads a Canadian atheist to Christ in Africa. Usually doesn't happen that way. Not a lot of Canadians go to Africa to get born again.

But it doesn't matter to our father. He's looking for the lost, seeking them out. And there's joy in heaven.

Shared by the father and the angels. Three stories here. One sheep missing out of a hundred.

One coin missing out of 10. And one son missing out of two. But in all three of these stories, there is an individual who sets everything else aside because they want to find the one that's missing.

And I want to suggest, not suggest, I want to declare, let's be stronger here. I want to declare to all of us today that the heart of our father is represented by the shepherd. Climbing through the bush.

We have a wonderful song in our song books that says, why are thy hands so rent and torn? They're pierced tonight by many a thorn. That person represents the seeking heart of our father or of the Lord Jesus. The woman, turning the house inside out, lighting a candle, needing more light.

I have got to find that silver. That represents the heart of our father. And the dad, standing out there on the little hill, looking down the path for the 100th time, for the 500th time, for the 1,000th time.

It really doesn't matter, but I don't think this was day three. Do you? Picture it. Each one of those is meant to be a representation to us of the heart of our father, seeking.

I've got to find the sheep. I've got to find the coin. I've got to be here waiting so that when my son comes back, he knows that I was looking for him.

I don't know where he went. I can't go look for him, but I'm gonna be here looking for him to come back down the path I know he's gonna come down. I love the picture of the rejoicing that goes on.

Picture that shepherd, grabbing that sheep, putting it on his shoulders, walking back with rejoicing. And as he gets back, he's calling out to all of his neighbors, hey, you know I was asking you about that sheep? I found that sheep. The neighbor woman, you know I was worried about that coin? I found that coin.

Hey, servants, you know my son that was dead? I found my son. And all three of those are meant to give us a picture, and Jesus just immediately sends it right over and applies it and says, there is joy in heaven over one that repents. How do you and I respond to our Father's prioritization of the lost being found? I'm not trying to build a doctrine on this beyond what the scripture gives us, but Jesus says there's more rejoicing over one that's found than 90 in nine that are already at home.

Now, that doesn't mean the 90 in nine are not valuable. Don't say he's belittling the fact that we're walking with Christ and we're in the church. There are many things that God rejoices over in your lives, and one of them is the fact that you're giving glory to him, and another one is that you're able to join him in his search for the rest that are still lost.

But there is more joy over the one that gets found than over the 90 in nine that are just already there. What do we need to do as believers to respond to the fact that this is our Father's priority? How do we respond to that? How do we respond to this joy in heaven over one that's being found? Because the angels mirror the delight of our Father in heaven. They're not going to disagree with our Father's joy.

And so in heaven, when someone gets saved, there's joy. Is there joy in our hearts? Are we prioritizing the finding of the lost in a way that accurately matches our Father's desire? He seeks and delights in the finding. Kind of seems like the Pharisees had it entirely wrong.

I wonder whether we're more like the Pharisees. I wonder sometimes if I'm more like a Pharisee. I know you're saying, well, you're the missionary.

Your whole life is to save the lost. Yeah, that's true. But the fact that you're a missionary on the other side of the world doesn't mean that you always look at needy people and say, oh, yes, bring them closer.

Are we like the Pharisees? I think the Pharisees have their counterpart in the final story, in the brother who wasn't lost and was upset by all the rejoicing. And the Pharisees proved that very clearly in the chapters that follow. They were not delighted that the sinners were coming to Christ, and they were certainly not

delighted that the Gentiles were going to be able to come home to the Father.

But I wonder in our own lives, do we more closely copy the Pharisees, looking on and saying, I wonder whether he's really a holy man because there seems to be a real connection between him and these sinners. I wonder about that. Jesus was so close to the sinful people of his generation that they threw names at him.

He's a winebibber. He's a publican. He's one of those people.

He's basically a party guy. He's always hanging out with the sinners. And yet Jesus' holiness was the kind of holiness which was not threatened by being around unbelievers.

There's absolutely no compromise in Jesus' life. But somehow he was comfortable with the sinners and they with him. What do I represent? Am I more like those publicans, looking on with a critical eye? There's a sinner.

There's a sinner around a saint. There's a sinner around Jesus. There's a sinner around that person.

Or am I more like the Lord Jesus, which says, no, you don't get the picture. I am here for these lost people. That's why I'm here.

And I'm looking forward to rejoicing when one of them gets found. I'd like you to search your own heart. I think these two days, if you haven't, again, if you haven't heard the evening messages, please try to do that, hear those.

But these two evenings and today, we've heard repeated challenges of the kind of lives that we're called to as Christians. And that's true whether it's on the foreign field or if it's right here locally. The example that our brother gave from California, I'm missing the name right now, Laverne, gave to us, challenging us that what America needs is one mission-oriented family in every single apartment building all across America and the rest of the world.

I can't get that out of my mind. You could say your city block or your road. There's a family represented here today.

I remember we were friends years ago and the father told me, our family has adopted our road. Some people adopt a mile and pick up the trash along that mile. If you drive the Pennsylvania Turnpike, you see that.

This mile is adopted by this group. He said, our family has adopted this road. There are 42 people who live 42 houses on this road.

And these 42 houses are our people. We give gifts, we hand out tracks, we seek to do good, we seek to know what's going on, we try to know our neighbors, we try to know if there's a crisis, we try to reach out, this is our road. Well, we expect every missionary to have that kind of approach towards life because you, after all, left home to go somewhere.

You expect them to be purposeful in every element of their life. I don't really think that there's a great theological difference between somebody sent overseas and all of us here. We should be purposeful.

Our father's heart is seeking the lost and those lost live in your block or on your road or in the apartment building that you live in. Those lost are the people in the building that you work in or in the taxi that you ride in. And I think the heart of our father is just looking, always looking, always looking and always just seconds away from rejoicing because I found one.

I wanna challenge our hearts today from this chapter to be like Jesus. You do not need to compromise in order for the sinful people to be comfortable enough to draw near to you. Let me repeat that.

That's been an oft-repeated misconception. Well, we don't want them to affect us. How are we gonna get close to them if we're not like them? We don't wanna be like them.

You don't need to be like the sinful people in order for them to feel comfortable. Let your holiness be a solid holiness within you based upon the word of God, but let it be coupled with love because something about Jesus was holier than we will ever be, perfection of holiness, and yet the love that came out of Christ was so attractive that the sinners just drew near. They wanted to hear him.

That's a beautiful picture, isn't it? Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if you and I could be so filled with the seeking love of our Father that people around us, the publicans and sinners that we come into contact with, would just start drawing near? I wanna be near. Many of you walked with us through the crisis when we lost our little girl in 2014, and God had put us in a hospital in a really unique situation. You take a missionary family, used to outreach all day, every day.

Suddenly, they're back in America for a medical emergency, and all of ministry life stops. All the meetings, all the outreach, all the discipleship, all that energy that we're used to pouring out every day into our people just stopped, and we cried out to God and said, God, you brought us back here. Why did you bring us back here? We were involved in ministry.

Good things were happening. If you have us here, please let us understand why we're here. Do you know, by the end of those months, and I know we bore testimony to it here, by the end of those months, we realized that God had not brought us here to waste our time in any way, but rather, God had brought us here to put us in contact with a whole bunch of people, some of which we're still in contact with today.

People used to come and knock on the door to our hospital room and say, is this the blessing room? I remember that day, we were there with our little girl who died at birth, and she was there in the room with us, and people were coming through, a string of people all day long. They said, this is the room where the blessing is. We came for our blessing.

And I told my wife, I mean, this is just bizarre. There was a Muslim nurse, and a Hindu nurse, and an atheist nurse, and several Christian nurses of various stripes. People were coming for their blessing.

I'm not trying to say we got it right. I'm simply trying to throw out yet another example that says it is possible for you and I to walk with God and live a holy life, but to be so filled with the seeking love of our Father that the publicans and sinners that we come in contact with just kind of drew nigh so as to hear Him. They feel themselves drawn.

You don't have to be like them. You have to have your Father's seeking love. My closing thought for you, I'm gonna repeat an old story here.

Might be pertinent. I feel many times like when I preach on the subject of missions, it looks like an additional responsibility or burden that is being added on top of the church. We should be doing more.

We should be reaching out more. We should be giving more. Oh yes, the lost of the world, like it's an additional burden.

I'd like to say like my brother said here a few minutes ago. How many times have you had people put notes on your car? And then he said, that's pretty cool. Thank you, Brother Elmer.

The life of reaching out to hurting people and just having a life that testifies and invites and takes time for people is pretty cool. I was here a few years ago and I said to you from the pulpit, I said, you know, I know that lots of people eat broccoli because broccoli's good for them. They don't like it, but they eat it because it's good for them.

But can you understand that there are some of us who eat broccoli because we really like broccoli? And a whole bunch of women in this church wrote that down and we got broccoli every home we went to, which was fine by me. And I'm just restating it for anybody that's gonna host us when we come back around again. We don't have broccoli in Africa, so thank you.

I'll take broccoli any which way you serve it. My point was that when I stand up here and say, eat your broccoli, you're thinking, oh, that's right, that thing I really don't like, but it's really good for me. No, I'm saying, eat your broccoli, guys.

It is one of the best vegetables. You can hardly beat it for texture, taste, and nutrition. Thank you.

This picture is not the drudgery of our Father's heart out there looking for the lost. What comes through to me so clearly in all three of these parables is the rejoicing. And I highly recommend to you a life that is lived with the seeking heart of our Father pumping through our veins, reaching out, cultivating that kind of loving engagement with the world.

What do we do with the light? We take it to the dark places. That's where light is needed. That's where light is visible.

That's where light is glorious. And these stories, every one of them, ends with joy because the lost got found. And just like Brother Elmer said, that's pretty cool.

It's pretty exciting to be able to reach out and be a part of the joy that resonates all the way from our Father's heart through our heart and all the way to the angels in heaven because somebody somewhere that was lost has been found. And if you feel sometimes like the brother of the prodigal, what's this really big deal being made over this person who's been living such a sinful life? The Father says, look, you're always with me. Everything I have is yours.

I'm delighted that you're my son. And the Lord Jesus is delighted that every one of us are in the fold and his and part of his kingdom and on our way to heaven. Amen.

But don't in any way let jealousy enter your heart that your Father rejoices over the lost being found. It is one of the most amazing qualities of our Father that he seeks the lost. Our Father is not sitting there on a throne in heaven saying, well, you guys really messed it up and you'll finally figure out that you messed it up.

And when you figure out that you messed it up, you can grovel and come crawling back, I'm here. No. Our Father seeks and rejoices in the finding.

Thank you for studying Luke chapter 15 here with me this afternoon. May God's love for the lost fill our hearts and may we start seeking them and finding them wherever they are. God bless you.

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