

Lost and Found: Rediscovering the Heart of God | Luke 15

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[0:00] Hey, good morning. It's good to see you. I have a little bit of a confession. Oh, no.

Next time I'll let you know what I pray for. If I'm honest, it's the first time for many, many decades I've had such instant results. And I felt almost like profit status all week.

But yesterday I was, as I was driving towards that town. Where was I going yesterday? Newbury. I was regretting. Lord, why did you have to answer my prayer?

Like, I don't know if I've ever asked that before. So I apologize. I believe, according to my wife, that normal service will be resumed shortly.

So I think we've got another week of answered prayer. And then another week of also answered prayer. That's the way to look at it, right? So, look, we are, as Joe said, we're wrapping up our study in Luke 15.

[1:30] And I hope it's been valuable. I hope it's been helpful. It's such a wonderful chapter.

And I was chatting to John, I think last week, maybe the week before, about how, you know, I chatted to him some years ago about kind of just the desire to teach on Luke 15.

And it's kind of been in the melting pot of my brain and my heart for probably the good part of a decade, I'll probably say. And so it's good for me just to kind of like get this off my chest and now kind of I can move on.

Because it's almost like group therapy. So thank you very much. So last time, this morning is our last study in Luke 15.

All right. But I want to kind of jump forward a little bit and just let you know that next week Sam Raju is going to be teaching here. And that's not an excuse not to come to the Apologetics Conference on Saturday.

[2:33] But the week after. And so then a week after, I think we're in the Book of Ruth. And so the Book of Ruth, if you don't know, is let's just put it like this.

It is one woman's way of living out Luke 15. Now, I know that she didn't know anything about Luke 15. Like, I don't need a lesson on that.

I know. But the principle is that we learn about someone who's lost. And, you know, she says, and we've actually titled the whole sermon series With You.

And it's all about, she says, you know, wherever you go, I'm going to go. You know, your land's going to be my land. Your God's going to be my God. I'm going with you. And that's what people need today, isn't it? It needs a, they need a church who are going to go with them.

And so, like, it's not an accident that we're going to Ruth. Just want to, you know, it's not like, oh, what should we do? We've got four chapters. What should we cover? We haven't done Ruth for a while. Let's do that.

[3:36] So, that's coming up. So, this morning, we're rounding off Luke 15. And we're not really going to be expositionally going through the text because we've done that for, some of you looked up in shock and horror.

We've done that. We've done that for five weeks. And if you missed it, it's all on YouTube. What we're doing this morning is wrapping up and asking the real big question is, how do we respond to the lost?

And we can't exhaust that in one study. But it's going to give you a kind of a little bit of taster within the context of Luke 15 about how we respond to the lost.

And so, the big moments in Luke 15, just to kind of recap, there are some lost. And God goes after them. And he does exactly what is needed to find them.

And it's probably one of the most hopeful and joy-inspiring chapters in the entire New Testament because you have these lost people or lost things. And then you have someone who goes after them.

[4:44] And it's pretty successful. I mean, wouldn't you like three out of four, at least, three out of four people that you speak to about Christ, they return to the Lord. Like, that's a great hit rate, isn't it?

And so, that's joy-inspiring and hope-inspiring, too. But it does more than that. It motivates us, as followers of Jesus, not to finish chapter 15 and say, well, that's a nice story about God going after people.

That warms my heart. It fills me with confidence. I'm grateful that God has gone after me. End of story. And we can't leave it there. So, what it does is that it inspires us to go out and do the same. Jesus said in John chapter 20, verse 21, He says, So, as the Father has sent me, even so I, so in the same way, I'm sending you.

So, as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. And this is the Christian's mission, to go and find lost people. And that isn't the difficult thing, is it?

[6:00] So, this morning, that's our focus. And I'm going to try, and I say try, because I've been trying to cut this sermon down most of the week, so it wouldn't become another three sermons.

So, I'm going to try and give it to you in three kind of main points for you note-takers. Hopefully, I put it on the screen. There's one.

Oh, brilliant. So, Luke 15 shows us that lostness comes in more than one form.

It's not just a category of lost. So, lostness comes in more than one form. Lostness, and also then, love must come in more than one expression.

And then, finally, the church is made up of more than one person. I've been reading a book just lately, and this is a little bit of a tangent.

[7:06] I won't go off on it too badly. You can ask me afterwards. And they said that, you know, it's not about you, but it's really all about you. It's not about you. But it's all about you.

And often, we take this kind of position. It's not a Christian book. It's a guy who used to coach the All Blacks. And we take the position in the Christian church.

It's not about me. It's not about me. It's not about me. It's not about me. It's about Jesus. And amen. We'd say that all day long. It's about Jesus. But actually, it is about us. Jesus said, as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.

It's all about you. Seeking and saving the lost is not something that is primarily done in kind of like the the ethereal, spiritual, and it never impacts the practical, everyday you.

Like, he uses us. And I'm skipping ahead to the third point, as you can see. He uses us. He desires to use us. That's how people get found.

[8:07] Through you. So it's not about you, but it is all about you. Good. Let me carry on. So look, Luke 15 shows us that lostness doesn't always look the same.

Lostness comes in more than one form. So some people, like the sheep, are lost because they wander. If you missed that sermon, go and grab it.

So some people are like sheep. They're lost just because they wander one nibble at a time, we talked about. But some people are like the coin.

They're not like the sheep. They are lost because they are wounded by others. Life circumstances have found them lost. Some people, like the younger son, they're lost because they rebelled.

That's the one we most likely identify with. Oh, the lost person is the person who is the sinner, rebellious, younger son. But then there's this older son who is lost because they're actually just a little bit self-righteous.

[9:16] They're a little bit proud. So the sheep was lost away from the flock. The lost coin was lost in the cracks. The younger son was lost in a far country.

And the older son was lost in a near field. Different sins. Different causes. But still lost. And the thing that we've been learning is that there are all kinds of lostness.

And the lostness doesn't always look lost. Right? Sometimes it looks like a sheep wandering.

Sometimes it looks like a coin lying in the dirt. Sometimes it looks like a younger son sleeping with the pigs.

And sometimes it looks like an older brother, an older son, standing outside of the party with a Bible verse and a bad attitude. And what we learn is that when Jesus said in Luke 19, he says, The Son

of Man has come to seek and save the lost.

All kinds of lost. And so if Jesus has come to seek and save the lost, and he said that the Father has sent me as he has sent me, so I'm sending you. Guess what our role is? To find the lost.

[10:30] But not just find the lost, because again, that's easy. But to bring the lost home. And we'd all agree that that's much more of a challenge.

And so how do you notice? And this is kind of the big proposition, I guess, from the whole sermon series. Is how do you notice who is who?

How do you notice if your friend or your family member is a sheep, as opposed to a coin, as opposed to a younger son, you probably know, or as opposed to an older son?

How do you know the difference? Well, look, there is a different cry from a different lostness. So the core cry of the lost is that where you see a lost sheep, it is, I don't belong.

The lost coin says, I don't matter. The lost younger son says, I don't need God. The lost older son says, I don't need grace. And if you think about it, and we'll go through this quite quickly, he says.

[11:37] That's always a lie, isn't it? Sorry. If you think about it, all the people that Jesus met in the New Testament, and I challenge you, if you want to, to go through the stories of the New Testament, the Gospels in the New Testament, and categorize everybody that Jesus met according to.

Are they a sheep? Are they a coin? Are they a younger son? Or are they an older son? And you'll be hard pressed to find one that doesn't fit one of those four categories. And because of that, my proposition is, is that when we are going about our daily lives, there will be people who fall into one of those categories.

And because they fall into one of those categories, the way that we then invite them to become found is a different way than the other. Let me unpack that.

So for example, in the New Testament, let's talk about the lost sheep in the New Testament. And I'll give you an example of the woman at the well. As you read John chapter 4, you could arguably place her, of course, in the younger son category, right?

Because of her broken relationships. But actually, there's a more profound lost sheep element. She comes alone to the well, right? She doesn't come with her friends. She doesn't come with the other women of the village.

[12:51] She comes alone. She comes at noon, which is completely the wrong time to draw water. She is avoiding everyone. She is isolated. She is disconnected. She is rejected.

What does Jesus say to her in John chapter 4? Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty again.

The water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And then what does he do? He sends her back to the community and says, go find your friends. Go find your husband.

And she runs back into the town. And the woman who avoided people suddenly becomes a witness to people. You think about all the times in the New Testament. The New Testament writers describe people as the crowds.

Like, who are the crowds? Like, I don't want to be one of the crowds, but as crowds. And there's crowds consistently throughout the New Testament. One of the most overlooked examples, they are just called the crowds.

[13:56] Matthew chapter 9, verse 36. It says that they were harassed like helpless and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. They're the crowds. The crowds are described as sheep.

Jesus himself uses shepherd language. They aren't necessarily rebellious people. Like, they're not throwing rocks at Jesus, right?

They're not religious people. They're not quoting the Torah back at Jesus. They're people who have found community in the wrong places and become spiritually exhausted.

They're lost. I mean, think about Simon, Peter and Andrew. Those two brothers, they're lost sheep. Because Jesus finds them in Matthew 4.

They're not rebellious. They aren't Pharisees. They aren't notorious sinners. What are they doing?

[14:56] They're fishing. They're working. They're mending their nets, living ordinary lives. And what does Jesus say to them? You seem like fish. You need to come and follow me. Be part of a community that is greater than the one you're in.

That's how we went to find lost sheep. And then the lost coin. You might remember the story.

I call it the story of the lost leper. Right? And if you want to draw a comparison, Jesus is basically saying the same thing, right? The story of the lost leper.

It sounds like the lost son. He was one of ten. Right? Jesus healed the ten. Nine went away. One came back. Grateful. Thankful. They were all restored.

But that one who came back is the one who understood what had been returned to him. Value. Purpose. The same thing you could say about blind Bartimaeus, the widow of Nain, in Luke chapter 7, where she is there at the funeral of her son.

[16:02] Her husband had already died. She's only one son. And Jesus raised this son from the dead. And what does that do? That restores value to that family. Zacchaeus.

You talk about younger, younger sons. Zacchaeus. He was a younger son. A lost younger son, wasn't he? Public sinner. Pursuing wealth apart from God.

Easy to spot. The thief on the cross. The unrepentant one. Open rebellion. Criminality.

The rich young fool. Living independently from God. Barabbas. Violent, rebellious, lawless.

Lost younger sons. And then, of course, you have the lost older sons, right? And so the Pharisee in Luke 18, you remember the story? He stood there next to a tax collector.

[17:02] His eyes are lifted towards heaven. His shoulders are back. His conscience is clean. And with a smile of self-satisfaction, he begins to pray, God, I thank you that I am not like other men.

Extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. Can you hear it? Like, it's not really a prayer, is it?

It's a performance. He's not praising God for his mercies. He's congratulating himself on his morality. And standing only a short distance away is his tax collector.

A younger son. A traitor, a cheat, a man everyone despised. But he can't even lift up his eyes from the ground.

The weight of his sin is too heavy. The shame is too deep. His head hangs low. His fists pound against his chest again and again. And all he can manage to say is, God, be merciful to me, a lost younger son.

[18:12] One man stands tall before God because he thinks he's earned a place there. The other can barely stand at all. One man has his resume. And the other has his need.

One points to his goodness. The other pleads for mercy. And then Jesus asks that question that turns the whole scene upside down. He says, which one went home right with God? You could place into that category the rich young ruler whose security was rooted in obedience and moral achievement.

You could place Simon the Pharisee who cannot rejoice in grace shown to the sinful woman. You could even place Saul of Tarsus. Lost older son.

Zealous, moral, religious, and vehemently opposed to God's grace. There are all kinds of lost people. And Jesus said that he had come to seek and save them.

So there's all kinds of lost people. We've said that for the last five weeks. I think we get it. Secondly, since there are all kinds of lost people, love must come in more than one expression.

[19:28] Because all kinds of lost people needs all kinds of found people. Does that make sense? Like confession time again. I don't do very well with older sons.

I'm just telling you that now. Like, I don't do very well with them. I have very little patience with older sons. You, on the other hand, you might be great with older sons. And younger sons, don't even get me started.

Right? And that, look, to a degree, that's okay. So there's all kinds of lost people. So we need all kinds of found people. So we see the shepherd.

And this is really key. How do we reach our lost friends and family? This is the key. The shepherd responds differently than the woman.

And the woman responds differently than the father. And so if lost comes in more than one form, the question is, how should those who have been found respond to lostness?

[20:36] And so notice with me now the manner in which those who are lost are found. Verse 4 in our text, Luke 15. Verse 4 talks about the shepherd. And Jesus says, doesn't the shepherd leave the 99 in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

Question. So the shepherd's reaction to losing a sheep is that he leaves and he goes. When Jesus describes the shepherd leaving the 99, he's describing a man.

Sure, he's describing a God who moves towards people who have drifted. The shepherd doesn't wait for the sheep to find its own way home. Now, look, you might argue that the father does exactly that, right?

The father with the younger son, what does he do? Well, he just waits for the younger son to return. The shepherd doesn't do that. The shepherd leaves and goes out looking. So how should those who have been found respond to this kind of lostness?

Well, first of all, look, it means that we notice people who are drifting to the edges. The person who quietly stops coming to church. The neighbor who always seems alone.

[21:53] The young person who feels disconnected. The single parent who is carrying burdens no one notices. The new family that still doesn't know anyone. The elderly widow who hasn't had a meaningful conversation all week.

The key thing is that the shepherd notices what others overlook. See, the shepherd counted differently.

The shepherd didn't necessarily count the 99. He counted the one. He didn't count the ones that were there. He counted the one that was missing. He didn't congratulate himself on the fact that he had 99.

Because like, look, 99 out of 100, that ain't bad, is it? Like, that's a good strike rate too. He counted the nine, but noticed the one.

And then he moved towards that one. He sent them a text message. I mean, not in our story he didn't, but like, you know, that's how we become the shepherd.

[23:01] He makes a phone call. He invites them to lunch. He learns their story. He remembers their name. The shepherd's ministry is often a ministry of presence.

Because before people can belong to God, they often need to experience belonging amongst God's people. Amongst the flock.

And for many lost sheep, the first step back to God is not a sermon. It's a friendship. And so I want to encourage you today. Notice who is not here.

And move towards them. And move towards them. Which this morning is about half of our church. Got some work to do.

But notice that that might be how the shepherd responds. But it's not how the woman responds.

The woman's reaction in verse 8 to losing a coin is that she lights a lamp.

[24:13] And she sweeps the house. And she seeks diligently until she finds it. There is still the idea, of course, that she seeks and finds.

But that looks very different from how the shepherd seeks and finds. The woman shines, if you like, a light.

A lamp. Now, you might say, well, what does that mean? Well, of course, biblically, the metaphor for light is truth. You know, all the way through the Psalms, he talks about the light and truth.

Paul made this absolutely blindingly obvious philosophical statement in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 13, where he says, when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible.

That's deep, isn't it? Thanks, Paul. What do you say? When you turn the light on, you can see stuff. Right? And so what he's saying is that truth reveals what is hidden.

[25:23] And makes everything clear. What your lost coin friends need is the truth about what God says about them.

And what he is doing or what he has done and what he is doing. It means clarifying what is true. And exposing what is hidden or distorted in someone's life.

It is to bring back a sense of value and purpose to that person because God is the one seeking them to save them. Let me just give you an example.

A few years ago, a man started coming to our church. And for several weeks, he kind of slipped in late. And he left before the end of the service. He wasn't a ghost.

But, you know, no one knew his name. Every time we looked around, he'd already kind of disappeared. And there was a reason for that. But one week, we managed to catch him before he left.

[26:24] And as we talked, he told me about his life and how he had grown up in foster care. And his relationships were a bit of a mess. And addiction was part of that story.

And he had spent time in and out of the criminal justice system. And he was on probation. And that's why he came in late. And he came in late and he went early. But what struck me most wasn't

really kind of his story and what had happened to him.

What struck me most was the conclusions that he had drawn from it. And the ideas or the truths, if you like, the false truths that he was believing about him and his life.

Like every story seemed to end in the same place, right? It ended with, I'm a failure. I'm damaged. I'm too far gone. It was as though his past had become his identity.

His past had become his current identity. And so I asked him a simple question. His name was Pete. Well, his name wasn't Pete. But I'll just tell you his name was Pete. Because it doesn't make any difference, right? So I said to him, Pete, look, who told you that?

[27 : 34] Who told you that that was who you are? And I remember he kind of looked surprised. And then I asked him, like, what if your life, what if your life isn't the highest authority on your value?

What if your past experience isn't the highest authority on your value, on your purpose? What if God gets to speak into that too? Just what if?

Like I'm not up for a fight. He was bigger than me. I'm not up for an argument. I'm just kind of going, what if? What if there is another voice that you haven't yet heard? And of course, for a moment, he didn't really know what to say.

And eventually he shrugged and said, I don't think God has much to say about someone like me. Isn't that sad? That's a lost coin right there. And actually, that's where the conversation changed. Because we started talking about all the kinds of people Jesus moved towards. It's like the unashamed, the broken, or excuse me, the ashamed, the broken, the outsiders. The people who believed that they had gone beyond repair.

[28 : 39] So we talked about the younger son. We talked about the woman caught in adultery. We talked about the tax collectors and sinners who seemed to be the very people that Jesus kept pursuing. Lost coin. Believing a truth that wasn't true.

I wish I could tell you actually that everything changed that day. It didn't. Years of shame don't disappear in a single conversation. But something did shift. And for the first time, the verdict that he had been living under was challenged.

And for the first time, another voice entered that conversation. And that's what the woman does in this parable. She lights a lamp. She brings light into a place that had been dark for a very long time. You see, all kinds of lost people need all kinds of found people. And so the shepherd's response to the lost sheep is different from the woman's response to the lost coin.

And they're both different to the response of the father towards the younger son. Check it out in verse 20.

[29 : 48] It says that while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him. You can't do that with lost coins.

I mean, you'll probably get punched in the face. You can't do that with lost sheep either. The father is responding in a way that is suitable for the lostness that he sees.

And look, this is incredibly different from the last two. Because the father is not described as going out and searching. I mean, that's the amazing thing, right? Is that he's not described as going out and searching.

It seems like the father just waits. Question, does he really? Does he really just wait? Like, because there are some signs in the story that suggest the father is actively doing something while he waits. Like, he's not just kicking back. Going to his men's therapy group and going, Oh, my son, would you pray for my son? I don't know what to do. And he goes back to the field the next day.

[31 : 05] Like, the father was not indifferent to the son going away until he returned. Notice that the father is not caught off guard by his return. Do you notice that?

Now, you may say, Simon, you're reading way too much into the story. I don't care. Right? I think this works. Like, when the moment comes, everything is already in place for his son's welcome home.

Like, that kind of suggests that love has already been decided in the heart of the father. Like, I'm going to decide how to respond when my son comes home.

Like, if he comes back, I'm not going to shame him. If he returns, I will receive him fully. If there is repentance, there will be restoration.

Like, in that sense, the love of the father was not improvised forgiveness in the moment. It already made room for it. Which means that he had chosen.

[32:15] He had settled in his heart. He had wrestled in his heart what that would look like. And look, would you see how the father welcomed him home?

With a fattened calf. Like, listen carefully. It wasn't a skinny calf and the son told to wait a few months. Was it?

He didn't say, dude, I wasn't expecting you. Like, our guest room has been let out. Sorry. There's nowhere for you to stay.

But it's nice for you to come. There was none of that. There was a fattened calf ready to go. There was anticipation in the heart of the father that when this day came, and it would come, that there would be a fat calf ready to go.

And look, of course, the fattened calf becomes more than food, doesn't it? It becomes a declaration of faith. So when faith becomes sight, and return happens, it's not met with hesitation or interrogation, but with a feast that was already waiting to go.

[33:35] And look, for us, that might mean that we've already decided in our hearts not to rehearse their failures if they return.

We've already chosen not to make them earn their way back into relationship if they return. We've already imagined what homecoming looks like, not just in our words, but also in our posture. So when lost younger sons do return, they are not met with confusion or hesitation. There is no opportunity for the younger son to finish and go, I'm not too sure how my father felt about me returning.

It is clearly obvious, right? He's not met with confusion or hesitation. He's met with love. And then finally, look at this story of the older son.

Remember this story. This son was lost in the field of duty. He was lost in the refusal of joy, lost in the logic of merit. And then in verse 28, the father responds to the older son, and it says that his father came out and entreated him.

[34:50] So the father doesn't only deal with the far off sinner son. He also steps outside to the near but lost son. And look, the church, we are surrounded by younger sons.

But the church is also surrounded by older sons too. Now here's the trap. The trap is that we look at the older son and we say those self-righteous people, those religious people, those legalistic people, only then to discover that we are one of them.

And that's the trap. Like we become very pharisaical about being anti-pharisaical. We become very proud about being humble.

We feel morally superior to the morally superior. Listen, if you can show grace to the younger son, but not the older son, you've become the older son.

And so we see that the father goes outside of the party. He leaves the celebration. He leaves the celebration. And insists that the older son comes in.

[36:18] Like if there's one thing I've learned about the Pharisee inside myself, is that we don't like joy very much. We don't like celebrating. We might lose control.

And I certainly, I'm not going to go to one of those happy clappy churches. And so look, the issue is that the father goes outside of the party.

He leaves the party. He leaves the joy. And he insists that the older son gets joyful. Gets happy.

That word entreated means to urge, to beg, or to encourage. The father, look, the father's not inside the party and goes, stop being ridiculous.

Come inside. Doesn't say that, does he? He leaves the celebration. Like, we don't meet people where we wish they were.

[37:25] We meet people where they are. That's so key. We don't meet people where we want them to be, i.e. inside the party.

We have to step outside and meet them where they are. And we listen to their argument. We listen to their problems.

I mean, the son has a well-structured, moral, emotionally charged reason for being angry, doesn't he?

Like, I served you. I never disobeyed you. You never gave me and this son of yours. Like, it's a logical argument. And what the father is doing is waiting until he hears the argument and then he waits to hear what is underneath that argument.

Because the father knows something that the older son doesn't yet know. That underneath the anger isn't rebellion. Underneath the arguments is not arrogance.

[38:32] It's insecurity. Underneath the moral language is a heart asking a very, very simple question. am I still loved here or am I only valued when I perform?

And the father opens the door of the party and says, in effect, everything I have is yours but you can't stay outside and call that justice. Because the tragedy of the older son is that he's not far away and yet he's very far away.

he was inside and still felt like a stranger. And the invitation of the father is the same invitation given to both sons come home, one from the pig pen and one from the porch.

both are invited into the joy of the father. Now, time is pretty much already gone so look, the third thing is, well, the second thing is love must come in more than one expression and that is the most difficult thing.

And this week in life groups we're going to look at this. We're going to decide I've got some friends and family. Are they sheep, coins, sons or older sons? And then how do we respond?

[39:58] That's going to be a challenge because that's hard. But look, the last thing is that the church is made up of more than one person. One personality won't reach everyone.

One approach won't reach everyone. God uses different people to reach different people. And some people are more gifted in bringing back belonging.

Like, they're just great. You know, they're the kind of people that you can just sit around the kitchen table with for hours and not know that you've been there for hours and you feel just like I'm part of the family.

And some people are great at that. Other people, you rock up to their house and they're like, what are you doing here? It's okay because you're just not gifted at that.

I mean, you probably should be more hospitable than that, but like, but it's not your gifting. Some people are more gifted in bringing back value.

[41:06] You know, the kinds of people that are just so encouraging to be around and they just see things in you and they just go, you know, you're great at doing this. They just encourage you.

And it's almost like awkward. awkward. You're like, oh, stop it. But it builds you up and you're like, I feel like I belong.

I feel like I have value. I feel like I have purpose. Some people are great at doing that. Some people naturally connect with younger sons.

they probably still bear some of the scars and some of the wounds that they accumulated over those years.

And like, I've got friends like that who are great at connecting with younger sons. They've done their time in prison. They've got those stories.

[42:05] other people are great at connecting with the older sons. Not me. I'm not great at connecting with older sons.

I'm like, there is a word called freedom. Learn it. But some people, that's not my gifting. I'm happy to tell you that's not my gifting. But some people are great at that.

Some people listen to people's arguments and logic and reason all day long. And I'm like, dude, it's an excuse. That's just my makeup. That's okay.

I probably should be more empathetic than that. But still, some of you guys are great at doing that. We're all kinds of found people.

And we're all different. Like, the church needs people who are in business to reach people who are in business. People who love spreadsheets to meet people who love spreadsheets.

[43:10] That's like a convention right there, isn't it? Like, people who are good with their hands to bring on people who are good with their hands. Students, reaching students.

Mums, reaching mums. Grandparents, reaching grandparents. Teachers, reaching teachers.

Artists, reaching artists. Young people, reaching young people. Older saints, reaching older saints.

Saints, all kinds of lost people need all kinds of found people.

And so as we close and we're going to break bread this morning and come to the table, my question is, will we become the kind of church that rejoices when grace reaches unlikely people?

And will we go after them?

Will we become the kind of church that welcomes younger sons and older sons? Because the father is still seeking. And that's the beauty.

That's the message. That Jesus is active today. Do you know that? He's working today. And will we, so will we by faith fatten the calf?

[44:19] It's a declaration of faith. Will we be ready for whoever the Lord brings to us or we go out and meet either way?

The shepherd is still searching. The spirit is still drawing. And the church has been invited to join that mission. As the father has sent me, so I'm sending you.

All kinds of lost people need all kinds of found people. Let's pray together. Father, thank you that you are the finder of lost things.

Father, thank you that ultimately it is you who goes out and seeks and finds. Lord, but we're so privileged, we're so blessed to know that you empower your people to go and do likewise.

and so Lord, fill us with hope and faith and joy. Give us the skills and the knowledge and the character to find those lost people that your spirit is drawing.

[45:42] and we pray this morning, Lord, that you would not only just help us to go and find the lost, but that the lost would be found.

That our efforts, however small, however kind of feeble in really the world's eyes, Lord, you would take that act of faith, whether it is going out or whether it's waiting, whether it's talking to someone about what is true or whether it's challenging the older brother, whatever faith example that looks like, Lord, we pray that you would water that seed of faith and it would bring forth fruit.

And so, Lord, we pray for all of our lost sheep friends and family, our lost coins friends and family, Lord, our younger sons and our older sons, Lord, we pray that you would raise up people to go and find them.

And even right this minute, even as we pray, your spirit will be working in those people so that when we talk to them, there is a readiness to receive the good news of Jesus Christ.

Lord, we want to thank you this morning, Lord, that the gospel doesn't end with us. Lord, but we do take a moment as we break bread this morning to remember, Lord, this is something you did for us and you have done for the world, Lord, and we want to thank you, Lord, that we get to commemorate this time, we get to remember the time where you broke your body for us and you shed your blood for us so that you might find the lost, that you might redeem the lost, that you might call those lost home.

[47:55] Lord, we want to say thank you this morning, Lord, that if we are followers of you, Lord, it's because you have saved us. It's not because we've decided that we haven't come to some kind of logical agreement that this is the right way.

Lord, it's because you've been working in us. Lord, we want the same kind of work to be done in our friends and our families. Lord, not because we want a massive church, Lord, but we want one day to be standing next to them in heaven, glorifying you for all of what you have done.

Lord, we come to your table. Lord, we want to say thank you, Lord, but we come as an act of faith, Lord, saying that this is what you are still doing and what you will yet do for the people that we know.

Lord, so we say thank you. Lord, we want to say help us, Lord, to become the people of Christ, the people of God, the church of God, that you call us to be.

Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So, Jenny and Zach are going to lead us in a couple of songs.