

The Lost Is Found

Luke 15:8-9

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?
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.'

Comments

A question in the background of our Lenten journey into the Scriptures is:
Why learn these things by heart? If you have a Bible, you can look them up and
read them; isn't that enough?

Learning by heart results a different level of knowledge than is acquired by mere
reading. In the ancient world, people who owned holy books and only looked
things up and read them were regarded as charlatans who did not want to "know"
the scriptures but only wanted to be familiar with them.

The same is true of many people now. Simply knowing where to look things up
often doesn't amount to much; it leads to superficial knowledge. True knowledge
means living with the words of God, writing them on your heart in order to have
deeper and broader kinds of knowledge. Those levels of knowledge include:

1) Intellectual knowledge—Learning by heart leads to a deeper intellectual
understanding that comes from knowledge of details, individual words, and the
background of the scripture. There is also the knowledge that comes from living
with the words over a period of time. The questions raised over time can lead to
study and investigation of the meaning of the words.

In this parable, for example, it is important to know that a drachma, the coin the
woman lost, was the equivalent of a denarius, a working man's pay for a day's
labor. For some people a drachma was of minimal value but for poor people a little
money meant a lot. In the kingdom of God, what many people regard as
insignificant, such as other "ordinary" people, is of great value.

2) Emotional knowledge—Learning by heart enables us to gain an emotional
knowledge of the feelings and emotional dynamics that are associated with a
particular scripture. The parable of the lost coin, for example, is about the emotions
of panic and grief at loss, of the anxiety and hope associated with searching, and of
joy at finding what was lost. Learning and remembering this parable can make it
possible for us to experience the possibility of joy and literally to learn about joy.

3) Relational knowledge—Learning by heart can make it possible for scripture to generate a new perspective on our relationships with others. It enables us to reflect on our relationships with others, and to come to know ourselves more fully.

In relation to this parable: Do we maintain distance from those we regard as immoral, lazy, corrupt or indifferent to faith, or do we reach out to them and search for a relationship with them? This parable is an invitation to rejoice at the transformation of a person's life that can come from a new way of life grounded in faith in God.

4.) Spiritual knowledge—Learning by heart can be a source of growing in our relationship with God. Learning to love someone involves learning the details of that person. So also with God, learning the details of God's Word and holding them in our hearts can enable us to grow in our love of God simply because we know God more intimately.

In this parable, we can learn about God's passionate search for us, and God's joy when we turn to God. We can also enter into the spirit of searching for God in our own daily lives. Whoever seeks God with all of their heart, mind and spirit will find God and that will be a source of joy and celebration.

Exercises

Suggestions for discipleship formation this week...

- ❖ Read Luke 15:1-10 through out loud once, and then read Luke 15:8-9 (printed in bold) several times. Here are the verses:

*Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.
And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying,
“This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”*

So he told them this parable:

*“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?*

When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.

And when he comes home,

*he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them,
‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’*

*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.*

***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?***

***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.’***

*Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God
over one sinner who repents.”*

- ❖ Underline what you decide are key words in the parable of the lost coin (printed above in bold) and write those words on the back of this page. Use them as a frame for learning the parable by heart.
- ❖ When have you lost something precious or important to you and succeeded in getting it back again? Tell God about that experience, then go over the story of the lost coin. Finally, listen for any sense of what God would say to you.
- ❖ Is there something you have lost that you never found? Tell God about that, too and then listen for any response you might receive to your story.