LECTONARY 2025 09 14.

THE LOST ONES.

Luke 15:1-10.

The great divide – “sinners drew near to him to hear him – who has the desire to draw near – to hear his words of life – in this case it was people who knew that they were empty – not complete – desiring for life and meaning for living – not just ‘getting on’.

The ones who came with a closed mind and angry critical attitude hear only what justified themselves: “this man receives sinners and eats with them.”

Jesus had a way of speaking that often was not a ‘yes or no’ conversation but a story that contained the answer that a genuine searching mind and a yearning heart would recognize the love, the truth in the heart of Jesus.

It is a question the disciples of Jesus asked him – ‘why do you teach in these stories – why not say straight out what you are teaching” – the Lord replies – “it is given to you to know these things but to others they hear but do not hear they see but do not see.” Matthew 13:9-11.

Our understanding is opened – we come close to Jesus – we hear – our knowledge of ourselves – of our separation from God and from ourselves! There is a knowing – an inside ourselves that ‘feels’ almost like a cry of pain inside, it is beyond merely knowing – it is a stifled cry in ones being that responds – “come to me all you who are heavy burdened – I would say also – come unto me all you who are empty – and I will fill you – give you rest.” (sort of from Matthew 11:28-30).

Consider the Lords words to his disciples the night of his arrest – the commitment – an unchangeable promise – consider who gave it – and what Jesus is promising – he will be leaving them – he is one man - even as the Son of God on earth – he is still limited to time and space – he cannot be physically with every one at the same time – Jesus says that He – the resurrected life – will be united in the God Head again – although there was only one horrifying unimaginable time of separation of the cross at his death when he cried out – “My God, My God why have you deserted me!” (Matthew 27:46) – **only** - the word is an insult to the violence and terror of that moment when Jesus “**became sin for us”** (2 Corinthians 5:21) **for us – for the Fathers will was to give us – the eternal plan – was for us to become the righteousness of God in Him – in Jesus.”**

The enemy of all thought that he had won – why would he care about us when he had the Lord of Glory in his power – he had won – NO -Jesus was himself without sin – he had lived our lives – flesh in this world – and had not – not even in his mind or emotions turned against God the Fathers will - against the eternal plan to bring you and me back into Gods family – to walk with him in the quiet of the evening (Genesis 3:3)

God raised Jesus from the power of the death that sin, rebellion, bring us under. *My mind asks – “what happened to my personal sins?” The two answers my human mind brings is 1) they were left in hell – do I dare drag them back in myself obsessed mind – does Jesus have to die twice – not possible – I only torture myself when I think that I am still bound by the old sins – the sins already forgiven – the new sins, the doubts the self-attitude is to be again drawn near to, listen to Jesus and in true openness to be restored in forgiveness.*

The Lord presents these two stories – with options – choices – lets see where we fit in.

V4-7 the parts: the farmer owns 100 sheep – a lot in that time.

One wanders off – leaves 99 with shepherds - safe – he has not abandoned they or left them to protect and fend for themselves – beware though of taking a parable beyond the main point that it is emplaning.

He goes searching for the one missing does not give up until he finds it.

Carries it back to the flock – wrapped around his shoulders

This impresses me because sheep can be very stinky animals – especially if they have been wandering – full of burs and not all soft wash wool knitted into a scarf!

He has a party “rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep which was lost.”

V7 is a statement – not a parable it is something that the Lord is specifically saying for us to hear: “I say to you that likewise there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the ninety nine just persons who need no repentance.” “There is none just – no not even one!” (Romans 3:10-12) these righteous ones can only be those who have repented and are walking with the Lord. One believer has become distracted, has not maintained their closeness of walk and been drawn into the world again – God does not give up on us – this sheep was one of the flock – the Lord is not going to lose even one of his people. The rest of us are in this search -the Lord is working through us to steady each other, to strengthen and encourage each other **and to be sensitive to Gods leading us to be part of Gods Presence working in the wanderers circumstance – bad as the consequences for their choices are. God does not give up – neither do we!** We may have to wait on the edges of their life for whatever time is necessary – but we are there.

When the Lord says something once – we better listen and do what is for us but when he tells us twice – as in this part – then boy - we better really get the message and live it.

What is the guardian of our souls talking with us about in this message from Jesus – we are of absolutely first preference to God – so loved and valued by God – individually – just us – the unique person that God the Father sends Jesus, His Word His Voice speaking with us, to live and die for us. Then the gift of His Presence to live in us and us to be in Father, Son, and Spirit – The Source, The Word and His Presence.

Let us have a party and live in the constant presence of Gods love for each of us.