

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 14 September 2025 - The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Exodus 32.7–14; Psalm 51.1–11; 1 Timothy 1.12–17; Luke 15.1–10

Homily

Today's homily has been written by Amanda Tuck, LLM in the Orwell Group Benefice

Sunday Morning Resources Luke 15.1–10

Seeking and Saving the Lost.

I wonder if you enjoy sitting around a table with friends and family at mealtimes?

Today's reading, from the start of Luke 15, opens with a meal.

So far, so ordinary.

However, this act of community, of hospitality, was, for Jesus- or for any of us, much more than consuming necessary calories.

Decent manners of the time, after all, required sharing available food and giving of oneself.

(I wonder how important it is for you to eat together as a family?)

But **this** meal forms the catalyst for one of the most provocative aspects of Jesus' ministry, **his fellowship with tax collectors, (or toll gatherers) and sinners. This group of people were thought to belittle the holiness of God by the way they acted.**

Tax collectors, because of their lifestyle, had deliberately opted out of the rules governing the covenantal people of Israel. They would have been abhorrent to Jews of traditional piety because of their well-known abuse of the taxation system. Their work led them to deal with unclean substances- money, and ritually unclean people.

Jesus, in short, was spending his time with outsiders- "*All the wrong people!*" People deliberately bypassing the Mosaic Law and its codes of behaviour.

In Luke's gospel, we discern an overarching theme of salvation for all. Salvation because of the focussed outreach of God towards sinful humanity. We witness God actively searching and finding sinners. This loving search for sinners brings about **repentance**.

We also read in Luke about Jesus's inclusiveness towards Gentiles, women and those outside the fold.

All are loved. God knows and loves each one of us, even the socially unacceptable. God searches for us. If we lose our way we can be found.

Hence, in Luke 15 today, we hear of Jesus's acceptance and tolerance of tax collectors and sinners. Those who need saving. Jesus, we learn, is quite prepared to eat with **undesirables**.

For the Pharisees and law men who witnessed this meal event, Jesus's sharing of God's good food with sinners was shocking behaviour. Eating with those who at that point had **not** repented according to the law; those still living in a state of unclean sin, was just plain wrong.

Jesus was always sensitive to-

- People living on the edge.
- Outsiders normally shunned.
- People who were abhorrent to Jewish religious leaders.
- People considered unclean, dishonest and sinful.
- Jesus nevertheless sought them out; or they found him.

Jesus showed us that he had love for all. As the parables indicate, loving Jesus searches out and welcomes the rejected in surprising ways.

Of course, Jesus himself **was vulnerable and later rejected on Calvary in the most painful way; but it was right there that he showed his power too.**

Pause

Context matters here. The meal being used as a backdrop for today's parables makes a key point about Jesus positively choosing to be with sinners: *"All the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near in order to hear him" (15:1)*

In Luke Jesus eats with sinners four times

Wrongdoers are drawn to Jesus at the opening of the chapter- Wanting to be close to Jesus; to be seen to witness his amazing acts as they heard his Good News. This whole section illustrates the theme of **repentance by sinners** in Luke.

The familiar pair of **Lost Sheep and Lost Coin** parables major on an overarching idea of repentance. People setting things right with God.

The triad of parables, Lost Sheep (15:3-7), Lost Coin (15:8-10) and the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) all deal with what is Lost and Found. In each case there is huge rejoicing at restoration. God actively seeking out and saving the lost.

Today's two parables, the lost Sheep and Coin, share a similar structure.

- First one element is lost from a much larger group, (sheep or coin).
- Secondly the person suffering the loss goes to great lengths to seek out the missing item and joyfully finds it to restore it to its right place.
- Thirdly, the finder invites others to share a celebration. This is a parable about community, repentance and restoration.

(I wonder, when YOU have lost something. Did it matter to you? Did you look carefully and thoroughly to find it?)

Jesus finally clarifies the moral of the story. You are loved. You repent, see the light, and you and we will be joyfully celebrating God's love in Heaven.

God offers us a chance to celebrate the joy of our own salvation, of us sinners being found and restored by God.

It is our privilege as Christians to pass on that joy and to invite others of all sorts and creeds to join the celebration.

That celebration might even involve a meal.

The closing lines press home the message firmly. They describe what happens in heaven when a sinner repents and turns to God:

"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (v. 7)

The coin and sheep, like those sinners grouped to eat with Jesus, were not blamed or punished for **being** lost. Instead, recovery brought joy to the whole community. God celebrates when a sinner is restored.

God, our loving God, always seeks out those who are lost.

The lost do not always find themselves, but rather, our Loving Abba Father God finds them.

Every one of us sinners needs repentance and the opportunity to turn towards God in joyful hope.

Will you let yourself be found?

Amen

Suggested intercessions

We pray for the Church, for the World, and We thank God for his goodness.

Dear God, when we do something wrong, we wander away from your love. We thank you that you are always ready to forgive us and lead us back to you.

We pray today for all those who live with feelings of regret, remorse of guilt about the wrong things they have done. Help them, and all those imprisoned by their conscience to repent and to be forgiven. Lead them back to the peace of your loving care, Father God.

Lord, in your Mercy,

Hear Our Prayer

Dear God, when we do something wrong, we wander away from your love. We thank you that you are always ready to forgive us and lead us back to you.

We pray today for all world leaders who make firm decisions about money, war and social justice. May they show by their policy making, real care for the poor and weak, for those who are sick and vulnerable. Enable them to see beyond self-interest and end war, to negotiate lasting peace in areas of conflict and anger in your world. May people who are victims of war be led back to you.

Lord, in your Mercy,

Hear Our Prayer

Dear God, when we do something wrong, we wander away from your love. We thank you that you are always ready to forgive us and lead us back to you.

We pray that your Church, with the privilege of power and office might lead many people and show the way back to you. In our Christian church throughout the world, we have immense potential power and huge capacity to act for good. May we help and support the search for God's young children through the wilderness of temptations. There will be rejoicing when the lost are found.

Lord, in your Mercy,

Hear Our Prayer

Dear God, when we do something wrong, we wander away from your love. We thank you that you are always ready to forgive us and lead us back to you.

We pray that we care much better for your beautiful creation. Father God, teach us to care for it as we should. Just like the lost sheep or the lost coin, help us to appreciate both what we have and what we might lose by being careless of our environment. May we rejoice in the restoration of your beautiful world and work to improve it one step at a time.

Lord, in your Mercy,

Hear Our Prayer

Lord, help us turn back to you. Reach out and save us. You are our father, and we are your children. You have always loved us, and we thank you for your ceaseless care and for all you do in our lives.

Merciful Father, Accept these Prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Suggested hymns/songs

Amazing Grace

Seek ye First

The King of Love my Shepherd is

The Kingdom of God

I Danced in the Morning

I will sing the Wonderous Story

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@lectionary resource)

It would be possible to do something about footsteps leading away from and back to God.

Maybe also something of a party idea to celebrate the return of a repentant sinner to God's party of celebration.

It might be fun to "hide" some lost coins (maybe those bits of foreign or pre-decimal penny currency which we might have lying around the house?) around the church and sort out a treasure hunt so that the children can find them and "buy" something from the person leading the service. You can't buy God's love though!