

Sunday Worship on September 14, 2025

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 292 Father, I love you
- Prayer for children

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Exodus 32:7-14
- Second reading: Psalm 51:1-12 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 15:1-10
- Sermon: **From lost to loved**
- Hymn BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 321 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty vs.1) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 376 Lord, the light of your love is shining

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

O God, you have searched us and known us.

You know when we sit down and when we rise up.

You discern our thoughts from far away.

Before a word is on our tongues, Lord, you know it completely.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, and so we humble ourselves in worship.

In this hour, search us and know our hearts, O God, and lead us in the way everlasting.

Praise song – BOP 290 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

Prayer of Adoration

Storytelling God, we gather in your presence this day, called by the stories of your people over the centuries. You are the source of wisdom we seek, your mercy eases the troubles that stir our hearts.

And we come to praise you, for your stories have the power to challenge us and change us. Draw near to us as we draw near to you this day.

Tell us the stories that will change our lives, through the grace of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

We gather in Jesus' name to hear the stories he told, to gain wisdom and to know your Spirit's guidance. Yet we confess that pride prevents us from hearing the good news and that we resist the power of your word to change us. Forgive what we have been, help us amend who we are and set us free to be who you have called us to be.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (The Lord's Prayer:)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The Apostle Paul asked, "Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ – and Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us." Friends, believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and set free by God's most generous grace.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 292 Father, I love you

Prayer for the 1children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Exodus 32:7-14
- Second reading: Psalm 51:1-12 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 15:1-10

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

Sermon: From lost to loved

Have you ever lost something small, but valuable? Like your keys, wallet, ring, watch, or your phone?

You know the panic that sets in. You retrace your steps. You dig through the couch cushions.

You dump out your bag. You check the fridge. Even though you know your phone isn't in there.

And when you finally find it, you breathe that sigh of relief.

"Ah... finally, I found it. Here it is..."

Now, here's funny thing. Jesus says heaven reacts like that.
But not over phones, wallets, or keys.
But, over people. Over you and me.
That's the heart of today's main passage, Luke 15.

Jesus tells two short stories.
A shepherd with 100 sheep loses one.
A woman with 10 coins loses one.

Most of us would shrug and say, "Hey, 99 is still plenty. 9 coins is still okay." BUT, that's not what God would say.

The shepherd notices one sheep missing. The woman notices one coin gone.

These look small for us, but if we see these lost sheep or a coin in the eyes of God, they are not small. What if we are the lost ones?

You and I might feel small in this world. We may feel overlooked, forgotten, or insignificant.
But, God notices you and me.

You and I matter to God. Not because of our usefulness, or our performance, or our success, but we matter because we are God's.

Notice what happened when something was lost in the Bible. The shepherd does not say, "Oh well.. too bad.."

This shepherd leaves the 99 to search for the one. The woman does not shrug. She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, searches carefully.

God is not indifferent to those who wander. God searches until he finds.

Sometimes we think of the Christian life as our search for God. But, not really. It's the opposite.

God is the one who is searching for us.

Maybe some of you came to church today thinking you're looking for God. But the truth is that God has been looking for you.

This is the gospel, good news. **We do not find him, but he finds us.**

Imagine that you are the shepherd looking for the lost one. Far away, you think you see something. You see the sheep upside and kicking his legs in the air. Would you tap your foot and scold this sheep? "Hey, where have you been!?! How could you be so foolish!!!"

We might.. to our spouse, or to our kids, or to the people around us...

But, our good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, did not.

Jesus picks it up, places it on his shoulder, and carries it home.

What was his face expression like? Sick and tired of looking for the lost sheep? Worry about the 99? Or happy and joyful with the rescue?

When the woman finds her coin, she does not hide it in shame. She holds it up with joy and says, **“I found it!”**

That is the heart of the gospel. Being found by God is not for punishment or to be scolded. **Being found by God is to be restored by him.**

Imagine losing a toddler baby in a park. When you find the baby again, your first response is not to scold, but it is to hug and to comfort. Relief floods your heart. “Ah.. thank you God, they are safe.”

This is how God feels when he finds us.

When God finds you, he does not shame you. He lifts you. He restores you. He carries you home.

Then, there are parties.

The shepherd calls his friends and neighbours. “Rejoice with me! I’ve found my lost sheep.” The woman invites her friends. “Come, celebrate with me! I lost a coin once, but I found it again.”

Now, this does not make any sense in our math. Throwing a party probably costs more than the lost sheep or the coin is worth.

But this is kingdom math.

In the same way, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

So, what does this mean for us today?

If there is someone who feel lost... if you feel like the sheep who wandered, or the coin buried in the dust...

Then, please know this. God notices you, searches for you, lifts you, and celebrates you.

You are not just found, but you are loved.

Let’s say that you found \$100 bill under the couch. Would you throw a \$1000 party? Most likely no. We think it does not make sense. It is our math. But, God’s math is different. God would throw a \$1000 party. That’s how much God is joyful when he finds one of us. This is how much he values us. Grace looks extravagant. It’s look foolish. But, this is love.

V9-10, “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.”

So, what does it mean for us today?

Maybe you might feel lost, like the sheep who is wandering, or the coin buried in the dust. Know that God notices you, God searches you, God lifts you, and God celebrates you. You are not just found, but you are loved.

Our call is to share heaven's joy. What can dare take away our joy?

V1-2, "Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus]. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'"

Gross. I don't like it. I have no joy in seeing him doing so.

The heaven is celebrating over these tax-collectors and sinners, but, on the other hand, these Pharisees are complaining.

Don't be obstacles of the heaven's joy. Rules are important, but love overcomes. Regulations matter, but love wins.

No judgment, but welcome. This is good news.

Our church is small and shrinking. Does this fact take away our joy in God? Yes. It worries me. My job is to attract many people to come and join the worship service and fill these empty pews with people.

But, at the same time, my job is to shift our focus from being small to being found by God.

Whenever you come here and focus on being shrunk and worry about people not coming, your joy is taken away by these facts. Of course, I worry. I feel responsible. However, at the same time, I see people who are worshipping, who try to stand before the awe of God, who quietly walk with God. The Head of the church is not me, a minister, is not the Session, the leadership group, is not members. The Head of the church is God alone. God takes care of his church.

So, it is great that we gather our hearts together to make our church more welcoming and deeply connected. However, the core focus should be the relationship with God and me.

You are noticed by God. You are pursued by God. You are carried by God. You are celebrated by God. In God's eyes, you are not insignificant. You are hopeful and you are precious.

So, the question for us today is will we take it? Will we believe it? Will we let ourselves be carried home on the shoulders of Jesus Christ? Will we rejoice when God finds someone else?

Live out this gospel. We were lost, but now we are found and we are loved.

This is the message of the Lord

Praise song – BOP 39 God of mercy, God of grace

Prayer for the people:

Gracious and loving God, thank you that in Jesus Christ we are not just noticed, not just found, but LOVED with a love beyond measure. When we wander, you search for us. When we return, you rejoice over us. Help us today to believe this good news. That heaven throws a party over one lost soul. Keep us close to your heart, and make us a church that shares your joy with the world.

Merciful and patient God, you are the Shepherd who seeks the lost, and the Father who runs to embrace the returning child. We thank you for your mercy that notices us, pursues, and celebrates us with joy.

We pray for those who feel lost today. Lost in grief, in loneliness, in fear, or in doubt. Find them, Lord, and carry them home on your shoulders. We pray for our congregation. Strengthen the weary, heal the sick, encourage those who feel stuck, and remind us that in Jesus Christ, no one is beyond your grace and love.

We pray for our world. Where there is war, bring peace. Where there is injustice, bring justice. Where there is despair, bring hope. Remind us, Lord, that your kingdom is big and wide enough to embrace every tribe, nation, and people.

Lord, we pray for ourselves. When we doubt our worth, whisper again, “you are loved.” When we feel far from you, remind us, “I am searching for you.” When we fear judgment, lift us with grace and joy. We trust you and we love you. In Jesus’ precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

In Jesus’ parable, the woman who found the lost coin rejoiced over something precious. What we offer to God is precious to us. When we present it to God, God rejoices in our gifts. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him.
(BOP #321, Praise to the Lord, the Almighty. Vs. 1)

Offering prayer:

Lord God, receive our gifts offered in a spirit of generosity and humility. Bless and use them for the work that you long to do in the world, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 376 Lord, the light of your love is shining

Now, it is our time to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, leaves 99 and goes out to look for one lost sheep. When we are found, he smiles at us, picks us up, and puts us on his shoulders. With a big smile and joyful steps, he carries us home. That’s your shepherd, Jesus Christ. Take him with your heart and live with him.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.