

Note: The following message will be shared by Reverend Caleb Kim this Sunday, October 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and our community on Zoom.

Title: How Much We Matter to God (The Miracle of Mercy, Part 3)

During this past Thanksgiving week, I have reflected on my journey of faith and have come to one deep realization: God has abundantly blessed our church, my loved ones and me. I admit that God has been deeply involved in every step of my sacred adventure—even during times when I was completely unaware of His hand. Today, once again, I humbly and honestly confess that without the mercy of God, I could not enjoy His abundant blessings for even a single day. While thinking of God's provision and protection over the years, I cannot thank Him enough, and it is hard to find words to express it fully. Fortunately, the Apostle Paul described how I feel based on his own experience when he met Christ. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Today, we are continuing our sermon series titled The Miracle of Mercy. In our Scripture reading, Jesus shared three parables with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law: the story of the lost sheep, the story of the lost coin, and the story of the lost son. In these stories, the shepherd, the woman, and the father represent God—and the sheep, the coin, and the son represent you and me. At the end of each parable, Jesus emphasized the great importance of saving what was lost. At one time, all of them were lost; now, all of them are found. In God's eyes, there are two kinds of people: the saved and the lost. But please understand: the rescued people are not better than the lost people. The found are no more valuable than the lost. Both are equally precious before the Lord. Throughout our message this morning, we will explore two primary questions: What do we lose when we are spiritually lost? What does God's mercy do when we are spiritually misplaced? Before we answer these questions, I want to highlight two quick observations about today's parables.

First, notice that all three of Jesus' parables end with a celebration! The reason for these celebrations is that finding the lost is a remarkable event in God's eyes, because every single creature is precious to Him. Recovering our identity as His beloved children is something to be celebrated with great joy! This truth reminds us that we should celebrate and glorify God's stories of redemption in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones every single day.

Second, consider what it means to be spiritually lost. When God created human beings, He used two components, as described in Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." One was the dust of the ground, and the other was the breath of life. That is why we consist of both a physical body and a spiritual soul. To care for our physical needs, we need to eat well, exercise regularly, and manage stress properly. But to satisfy our spiritual longings, we must stay connected to our Creator. If

our relationship with God weakens, we can easily wander off and get lost. Without a constant connection to God, our spirits become misplaced.

Now let us address the first main question: What do we lose when we are spiritually lost? Based on Jesus' three parables, there are three things we can lose.

In the story of the lost sheep, the first thing we can lose is our direction. Sheep farmers tell us that sheep have poor vision and easily lose their way if they lack guidance from their shepherd. In the Bible, human beings are often compared to sheep. Like sheep, we can quickly lose our spiritual direction without the help of our Good Shepherd. If we are not guided in the right direction by the Wonderful Counselor, the Holy Spirit, we can easily be tempted to go the wrong way and end up in harmful places.

The good news is that Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd. He is also the Alpha and the Omega—meaning He knows every path we have taken from beginning to end. He leads us along the best possible route, regardless of the challenges we face today. Because the Lord guides us along right paths for His name's sake, we can rest, enjoy His blessings, and fulfill the purpose He has for our lives. But if we disconnect from Him, once again, we wander and stray.

The second thing we can lose is our potential. We see this in the story of the lost coin. When we are lost, we lose the opportunity to become the people that God created us to be and to do the meaningful work He designed us to do.

When God created humanity, He blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In a profound sense, we are called to use our potential to do great things for the Lord. Every single person here today—and everyone joining us online—has been given unique gifts by God. These talents are like the silver coin in Jesus' parable. A silver coin is valuable because it can accomplish good things. But if it is lost under a couch in the dark, it can do nothing. Our potential is lost when we listen to negative voices or allow the enemy to isolate us from God. That is why we must ask ourselves daily: Am I staying connected to the Lord and listening to His encouraging Word?

Thirdly, we can lose our happiness and our home in Heaven. In the third parable, the younger son chose to leave his father's house. He squandered everything he had been given. Eventually, he found himself starving in a pigpen, longing to eat the pods given to the swine, but no one gave him anything. He became deeply miserable. When he cut himself off from his father, he lost both his happiness and his home.

God created us with free will. He does not force us to obey Him like robots. But without the spiritual discernment that comes from the Lord, we make poor choices that rob us of our joy. Furthermore, if we persist in turning away from God, we risk losing our true home—our eternal home in Heaven. If you ask me why I repent of my sins and trust in Christ, my answer is simple: I want to live a joyful life on earth, and I also want to spend eternity in Heaven with my Lord. As Jesus asked in Luke 9:25: "What good is it for

someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?" (Luke 9:25). When we live in rebellion against God, we forfeit true happiness and our heavenly home.

However, I want to emphasize this crucial truth: we never lose our value to God, even when we lose our direction, our potential, and our happiness. Even when we are disconnected from Him, we remain precious in His eyes. That is why God sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to lay down His life on the cross for our salvation.

Now let us look at the second key question: What does God's mercy do when we are spiritually lost? The three parables show us three beautiful aspects of salvation.

First, salvation means we are rescued from ourselves. In the first story, the shepherd went out to search for the lost sheep and rescued it. Spiritually speaking, we all need to be rescued. Some might think, "I don't need to be rescued from anything." But the truth is, we live in an imperfect world. The Apostle Paul spoke of the consequence of this: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). No one worshipping in this sanctuary or via Zoom is immune to this reality. One way or another, we have all done things we are ashamed of. We all have some degree of dependency on things other than God, whether we recognize it or not. Sin has a powerful influence on us, and on our own, we cannot escape it.

Over the years, from my own experiences, I have realized that I am often my own biggest problem—my selfishness, my pride, my laziness, and my shortcomings. Paul also shared his inner struggle. Despite his entire outstanding education and knowledge, when he realized he was living apart from Christ, he cried out in Romans 7:24: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" But once he met Jesus, he declared with confidence: "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25). "All are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Christ rescued Paul from himself and empowered him to fulfill his calling.

Second, salvation restores our potential. In the second story, the lost silver coin was helpless to recover itself. It required someone to search for it, find it, and bring it back into use. Many of us have felt hidden in dark places, unable to use the gifts God gave us. Whether we realize it or not, once again, God our Creator has given each of us unique talents and gifts to glorify Him in various ways. When we, as branches of the True Vine, Jesus Christ, are disconnected from Him because of sin, our abilities can be buried and our God-given potentials hidden away.

Consider John Newton. John was raised by a praying, godly mother who taught him Scripture. But as a young man, he turned away from God, joined the slave trade, and lived a reckless, sinful life. One night, during a violent storm at sea, his ship was nearly submerged. In desperation, he cried out to God for mercy. God spared his life, transformed his heart, and restored his potential. Newton went on to become an ordained minister, an abolitionist fighting against human slavery, and the author of the

beloved hymn Amazing Grace. I want to read the lyrics of that hymn to you: “Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.” That is what God’s mercy does—it finds us and restores our purpose and potential.

Third, salvation reconnects us to God. In the third parable, the prodigal son finally returned home. First, he admitted his wrongdoing: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.” He was no longer content living without true purpose. Second, he recognized his need for mercy: “I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” His heart was broken over his sins. Third, he got up and walked back to his father, having acknowledged his shortcomings and repented of them. He dedicated his life to his merciful father, saying, “Make me like one of your hired servants.” He turned away from a self-centered lifestyle and centered his life on his father.

And how did the father respond? He didn’t wait passively inside the house. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to meet his son! He embraced him, kissed him, and threw a great celebration. He placed a robe on his shoulders and restored his status—not as a servant, but as a beloved son. That is the heart of the father. Once again, the loving father in this story represents our Heavenly Father. When we repent of our sins and put our trust in God, the Lord restores our identity as His sons and daughters. Paul put it this way in Romans 5: 10. “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life.” That is the mercy of God.

Friends, these parables show us just how much we matter to God. Each of us is priceless to Him. How do we determine the value of something? By the price someone is willing to pay for it. There is a story about a wealthy art collector whose only son died in battle while saving a fellow soldier... The auctioneer replied, “It’s very simple. According to the father’s will, whoever takes the son...gets it all.” This story points us directly to that well-known passage, John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus paid the ultimate price on the cross because you and I are so valuable to God. He came to rescue us from ourselves, restore our lost potential, and reconnect us with our Heavenly Father.

Today, let us bring our mistakes, failures, and burdens to Him. Let us ask for His forgiveness and receive His overflowing mercy. Let us run to the throne of grace and trust Him with our whole heart. May we dedicate ourselves to sharing His love with others who are searching for direction, purpose, and home, Through the mercy of God, we find clearer direction, restore our potential, and enjoy our true happiness—both here on earth and in our eternal home in Heaven. We could never earn these blessings on our own, but by His grace, they are freely given to us when we repent of our sins and put our trust in Him. That is how much you and I truly matter to God! Amen.

**In this message, I have drawn inspiration and outline materials from Pastor Rick Warren’s sermon series “The Miracle of Mercy” (specifically on Luke 15:1-24).*