



**From the vault. . .**

## **LENT - IT'S NOT ABOUT THE CANDY!**

### **Gospel of Luke Chapter 15**

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

<sup>8</sup> "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins <sup>[a]</sup> and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

# REFLECTION—

The main point in these parables (stories) is God. God is the main character in every parable. These stories from Luke show us the desire of the shepherd and the woman as a metaphor for God's desire to find us. The 99 sheep were left in a field and the woman took up a broom to find what was lost. God continually searches for us in all the corners of our lives. God's focus is not about sins, not about how good we are. And, for sure it is not about the candy! It is about the need of the finder to find not sheep or a coin but us.

God shared this desire with us when we were created and planted it deep within us. It is a desire and longing to respond to God and often expresses itself as a longing for fullness. Too often how we live our desire can get acted out in twisted and harmful ways. Yet like the home app on a cell phone we are continually drawn home to God.

I would like to suggest three expressions of our desire and together see how no matter what else is happening, God is still calling and drawing us in all the aspects of our lives.

**INCOMPLETION** - This is a feeling many of us have that something in our lives is missing. We have a lingering restlessness and being uncomfortable with this feeling we can try to fill it up with "stuff". Some people choose alcohol or drugs while others express this in things like hoarding or being overbearing with their children. We want to fill the feeling of something missing yet we need the empty space. It is where God meets us. Keeping and honoring that space is holy.

**COMMON LONGINGS** - Often we experience God in what would be considered common situations. When we are captivated by a full moon, feel the first Spring breeze on our face, or moved by a tiny hand gasping ours. A feeling comes over us that can lead us to the brink of something just beyond ourselves. We are experiencing awe. Can we recognize these moments as having their origin in God? A God who is right there with the "broom" sweeping up our lives and finding our souls.

These religious or spiritual experiences are often dismissed not out of doubt that they are real but out of fear that they are real. This is because it is all so overwhelming to accept a God, like the shepherd and the woman is searching for what was lost.

**VULNERABILITY** - When we are a loved one who is in a crisis and we have exhausted ourselves trying to find an answer it is only then we turn to God. It is then when our defenses are down that God is able to reach us. Why wait until then? God is always alongside side us and wants us to open ourselves to God's Grace offered in every moment.

We have all been taught that Lent is a time to find ways to be better. That is a great motivation to find something that does not touch us in that deep space of the desire God shared with us at our very beginning. This Lent why not enjoy our candy and open our hearts to be transformed in Love?

I came across a great quote to end with but could not find the author. I share it with you and give thanks to whomever said it. God speaking to us, "If you want to be like me I will help you, knowing that we are alike. If you want to be different, I will wait until you change your mind." Wow! God never gives up!

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If you would like to receive a reflection from the "vault" - a talk I have given during past Lenten seasons please respond to this email with you name and email. I look forward to sharing these with you.

Many Blessings on your Lenten Journey!  
Sister Pat