

THAT'S GOOD NEWS

OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF SHARING OUR FAITH

WORSHIP SERIES

AUG 25 - SEP 22

The Lost

Date: September 8, 2024

Text: John 3:16-17; 1 John 3:1-10; Luke 15

This week's challenge (along with our prayer and 4 steps of the Gospel) is to write a **FRAN Chart**. This stands for Friend, Relative, Acquaintance, and Neighbor and the chart is someone who needs to hear about Jesus from each of these categories. If you have already made your FRAN Chart, pray the prayer from week one over each of those names.

We also invite you to come as a group to next week's **Faith Conversations Workshop** in the Building 5 Gym at 5:30pm! This workshop will equip you with practical skills and experience in sharing your faith.

BIG IDEA

As a church that is being transformed by God, we want our heart to look like the heart of God which breaks for the lost. God is a God of love; love is not merely an emotion but a compelling force moving God to fight for His creation—for us. He is so full of this love for us that He sacrificed His only Son to save us. If we are to be a people truly transformed by the love of God, we too should feel this compelling force; this compassion and drive to reach the lost. Our friends, family, neighbors, and communities desperately need to know of the hope that is Jesus Christ; who will tell them if not you? The harvest is plentiful—our world is full of hurting,

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broken people—but the laborers are few. Will you step into the field? Will you offer hope to this world that desperately needs it?

Conversation Starter

- How has the love of God changed you? Compelled you to move?
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COMMENTARY #1

(John 3:16-17) Perhaps the most widely known verse in the Bible, John 3:16 encapsulates the heart of God so well. Because God loved the world, before the world knew or loved Him, He sent His only Son to die so that the world could be reconciled. This was a countercultural declaration to a people who believed God only loved the Jews or religious elite; but here we see the love of God is for *all* people that anyone who believes might be saved. But verse 17 further illustrates the heart of God; not set on condemnation (what we deserved) but on rescue, healing, and hope.

Discussion Questions

1. How does this verse demonstrate that God's love is *active* and not merely a feeling? How is this different from cultural perceptions of love?

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2. What does it say about the heart of God that He loved us in our brokenness and sin?

3. What does it mean that God did not come to condemn us? Do you ever feel condemned by religion? How is this different from God's love?

COMMENTARY #2

(1 John 3:1-10) John begins by writing of the goodness of God, "what love has been lavished that we should be called His children." We are not servants striving for acceptance, but fully loved children of God. Our identity is clear, and while we do not know for sure what the future looks like, we can rest assured that we will be like Jesus, the One we love. This is the hope of the Gospel, that one day we will rest in unfettered love and adoration for our Savior. And while sin and brokenness often hinder us now, Jesus came so that God's love will overcome every single time. And it is only by living in this love that we are able to live righteously and love others.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean that we are God's children? Explain that relationship.

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2. Do you ever feel like sin or brokenness hinder your relationship with Jesus? Explain.
 3. How does it comfort you knowing that we are promised an eternity where we can wholly love and be loved by Him?
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COMMENTARY #3

(Luke 15) This chapter gives us the parables of the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son. In both, something is lost; the coin is lost due to no fault of its own (it could not help where it falls) and the prodigal chooses to leave. Regardless of how the lost thing ended up lost, these verses illustrate the heart of God as both are searched for, chased after, and welcomed with celebration and love.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been “lost” in life? Was it because of circumstances you had no control over? Did you choose it? Explain.
 2. How does God “chase after” or “pursue” us?
 3. This chapter shows us God’s heart for the lost; how can we mirror His heart of pursuit, compassion, and love?
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1. Do you struggle more to show the love of God or receive the love of God? Explain.
2. Read the Prodigal Son together as a group. Consider the following questions:
 1. Do you relate more to the older son (laboring without love) or the younger (living for yourself)?
 2. What is the heart issue that both brothers have?
3. Culturally, the younger son had humiliated his family and when he returned home, could be met by a council that would condemn him forever. The father knew this and ran (humiliating himself because culturally, men did not run) to put his cloak on him, publicly proclaim his blessing and love, and save his son from condemnation.
 1. How is this a picture of Christ?
 2. In what ways can we welcome prodigals back home?
 3. Do you think the church does a good job of this?
Discuss.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sermon - [Spiritual Indifference \(youtube.com\)](#), Craig Groeschel

Devotion - [Watching the Horizon for Your Prodigal \(proverbs31.org\)](#)

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GROUP ACTIVITY

Have everyone pull out their FRAN Chart and lay them in the middle of the circle. Count how many names are listed, how many hearts need Jesus.

For each of the people in your FRAN chart, give a name or title that describes them in one word. For example, you have four names on your chart and their words might be:

F: Jane Doe Mother/Mom

R: John Doe Football Coach

A: Jane Doe Artist

N: John Doe Realtor

This allows the others in your group to begin to see them as more than just names. These are parents, students, artists, leaders, and humans who desperately need Jesus.

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Date: September 8, 2024

Additional Curriculum Text: Ezekiel 34:1-16

This is the additional curriculum for this week! It carries the same heart and message of the primary curriculum but draws from a different passage than what the pastor taught on.

BIG IDEA

As a church that is being transformed by God, we want our heart to look like the heart of God which breaks for the lost. God is a God of love; love is not merely an emotion but a compelling force moving God to fight for His creation—for us. He is so full of this love for us that He sacrificed His only Son to save us. If we are to be a people truly transformed by the love of God, we too should feel this compelling force; this compassion and drive to reach the lost. Our friends, family, neighbors, and communities desperately need to know of the hope that is Jesus Christ; who will tell them if not you? The harvest is plentiful—our world is full of hurting, broken people—but the laborers are few. Will you step into the field? Will you offer hope to this world that desperately needs it?

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Conversation Starter

- Do you think a desire to reach the lost is a feeling or an action? Explain.

COMMENTARY #1

(Verses 1-4) Here, Ezekiel writes to the leaders (shepherds) of the people with a message from God. God is condemning these leaders for “feeding” themselves, but not caring for the people (sheep) that are under their care. These unfaithful leaders have not cared for the sheep’s needs or nourished them (we understand that nourishment comes from true teaching of God’s Word). Too, these unfaithful shepherds haven’t strengthened, healed, bound up, brought back, or sought out their sheep. These actions would describe the behavior of Godly leaders; yet, these clearly lacked compassion for those entrusted to them.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think modern churches have a tendency to “feed themselves” or to selflessly care for their sheep?
2. As a sheep, do you feel fully nourished?

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3. As a shepherd, what do you do to “strengthen, heal, bind up, bring back, and seek out” lost sheep?
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COMMENTARY #2

(Verses 5-10) Because the sheep had unfaithful shepherds, they decided it was better to have no shepherd at all. This scattering caused them to become prey to beasts of the field and suffer greatly. God refers to this flock as His; the tone here is not just ownership, it is one of endearment and heartbreak for how they have been neglected under the care of the shepherds. So God rebukes the shepherds and instead promises, “As I live...I will deliver my flock...” God would punish the leaders for their preying on the sheep by removing them from their position (“cease feeding the sheep”), stopping their abuse (“the shepherds will feed themselves no more”), and removing the flock (“deliver the flock from their mouth”). The message here is clear; since the shepherds failed their job, God would judge them and rescue His sheep.

Discussion Questions

1. The flock was scattered because of the shepherd's unfaithful leadership. Do you think followers of Jesus hold any responsibility for the current “scattering” we see in our society? Explain.

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2. Why do you think God rebukes the shepherds but holds endearment for the sheep?

3. Are you doing your job to care for God's flock? How? How can you start?

COMMENTARY #3

(Verses 11-16) Out of love for His sheep, God promised to do the work that the unfaithful shepherds would not do. He exhibits sovereign determination and irresistible power in His proclamation of "I will" repeatedly. God promises to come down and gather together the scattered sheep—He did this once and for all through Jesus Christ. God's restoration of His sheep would not only be physical, but also spiritual as His people would once again be united in relationship with Him.

Discussion Questions

1. How does it make you feel that God is motivated by His deep love for the lost sheep? Are you motivated by that same love?

2. How are the lost unified through the work of Jesus Christ?

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GOING DEEPER

Blog - [The Significance of Shepherds and Sheep in the Bible, Bible Gateway Blog](#)

Read this article to better understand Biblical shepherding. Discuss what you learned; what was interesting to you? Does this give you a better understanding of God's heart? Of our calling to care for the sheep?

1. Do you find yourself being motivated by love or *for* love?
 2. Who are some "good shepherds" in your life? Leaders who lead well?
 3. What makes a shepherd "good?" What makes him "bad?"
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Faith Sharing Stories

Carrie Gray

Sharing our faith can be really scary! We often believe that we're not qualified, we're going to mess it up, or that we don't speak well enough to be a witness. But God has called each of us, even in our imperfection, to tell the world about Him. He delights in using imperfect, broken people for His glory—even in our failures and missteps, He can be honored by our simple “yes.” His strength is made perfect in weakness! These are some stories of what seems to be “faith sharing flops” but, as you'll see when you read them, maybe they are exactly what God could turn around and use for good.

That's Good News!

I never knew how I found myself in these positions; but inevitably, I did. Someone had asked me to share about my faith and my testimony, and while I was eager to share what Jesus had done in my life, I knew there were so many other people who could do better. Why didn't they ask them instead? Here I was, still very new in my commitment to Jesus, married to a pastor, and struggling to figure out the right words to say. Maybe I'm just not the right person to share my faith.

As I was typing and retyping the message I would share, I mulled over which Scripture I should include. Finally, I settled on the one—

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this would be absolutely perfect! It was exactly what I was trying to convey and I was absolutely certain this verse was from the Holy Spirit. Not wanting to get anything wrong, I stepped out of my office to ask what the reference was. I am not one of those people who can quote every verse and story from the Bible off the top of my head and I didn't want to get anything wrong. So with confidence, I asked my husband (the pastor!),

“Where is the verse, ‘Seek first to understand then to be understood?’”

With a smile on his face he responded, “That would be verse 5 of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.” So not the Bible.

“It was the “Seek” that got me,” I said back before going back into my office and finding an actual Bible verse to share.

I don't remember that conference exactly, but I know that each time I share what Jesus has done in my life I probably don't get every word right. I can't quote all the verses and I don't know the Bible as well as some people do, but I don't let that disqualify me anymore. Each time I have said “yes” to Jesus—even when I was uncomfortable or didn't have the right words—I have learned more about His love and grace than the time before. I started seeking Him instead of seeking perfection or performance and the mess-ups or misquotes didn't matter as much anymore. His abundance is shown in my lack.

It is definitely important to know the Word of God, but we can share our faith and our stories even if we can't quote every verse or haven't been in church our whole lives. While the Bible might not say, “Seek first to understand and then to be understood” it does say that those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. He has commanded us to share our faith, and while you might not feel like you're the right choice, He promises that you won't lack anything you need *if* you seek



Him. Maybe, like me, you'll find more of Him when there's less of you—misquotes and all.

“The young lions suffer, want, and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”
Psalm 34:10