

Luke 15:1-10 - We are 4 The 1 Who Is Lost.

October 24, 2021

Bumper Video — Mission

Here at CrossWinds Church, we are on a mission. We are all about reaching people with Jesus. What does that mean? It means that we are looking for opportunities to get to know people who don't know Jesus. "Reaching" is an action word. "People" means all people --- here, near, and far. "With" means together --- with Jesus, with the Spirit, and with love. The answer is "Jesus." And "with Jesus" is how the disciples became disciples. Being on mission means that we are not focused on ourselves but on others and, specifically, a healthy amount of our time on people far from God. We naturally like to spend time with the people we already know. That is why we need to be very intentional about looking for relationships outside the church.

Thank you Kendra for sharing about our mission! Good morning. Welcome to CrossWinds Church. This morning we begin a new series. It is a short series. It is only four weeks in length. The name of the series is called Vision. Pastor Jordan and I are sharing the elders' Five-Year Vision for CrossWinds Church and the biblical background behind it.

Before we dive into the elders' five-year vision for the future, as I was writing, I realized there a number of us that are new to the CrossWinds family. This is an opportunity for me to back up a bit and teach on the CrossWinds mission that drives us and the core values that define us before getting into the elders' vision for the future. Let's take a few minutes to talk about the CrossWinds mission and core values.

Our mission is simple. It is "Reaching People With Jesus." We made it short and memorable so all of us can remember it. In Deuteronomy, Jews were told to put Bible verses on their doorposts so their children would see them and

learn them. In a similar way, we posted our mission on the wall. It is above our entryway in the foyer. It is also on the wall in the gym. That way all of us see it, read it, and remember the mission we are on as a church.

As a church, we support missionaries. These are men and women living in different communities around the world that are being lights for Jesus where they live. I don't know if you realize that God has also called each of us to be missionaries. We are to be lights for Jesus in the communities where we live in Spirit Lake and Spencer. Every one of us has a job. It is not to simply attend church. Our job is to meet people and tell them about the love of God through Jesus. Our job is to invite people from the community to church where they can learn more about Jesus. Every single one of us are missionaries. Reaching Jesus is our mission. It is something all of us must own.

We also have our core values. Before we changed our name to CrossWinds Church, when we were still Faith Church, we called these the Faith Church fingerprint. Our core values are what makes us unique as a church. Before we went multicampus, we needed to establish them as a church. I wanted to make sure we knew what values we were replicating, not just the campuses we were replicating. Unfortunately, I have not found a place to put them on the wall. I will get that done sometime soon. If we don't see them, it is easy to forget them. Core values describe what is important to us as a church. It describes how we will go about achieving our mission of reaching people with Jesus at CrossWinds. These core values are very important to me. I hope they are important to you. Let me quickly share three of our core values. There are a total

of seven. They found on our website. If you want to learn more about them, please check them out at crosswinds.tv.

1. **Bible** — We believe relevant, expositional Bible teaching and Christ-centered worship are the backbone of church health.

This is why we have our fingers in the text. This is why we preach from the Bible. We love the Bible. We love to teach right from the Bible and teach through books of the Bible. We also like to sing the Bible. This is why Pastor Andy is either to sing words of Scripture or songs that support Scripture and theological truth. We don't sing faddy songs or fun songs. We sing biblical truth.

2. **Community** — We believe authentic relationships that serve one another and honor Christ in the life of the church.

We strongly value relationships. We do not just want you to come to church, but we want your church to feel like family. We want CrossWinds to be a place where each of us feels connected. We want CrossWinds to be a place where we serve one another. This is one of the reasons we encourage you to become a part of a Life Group. In Life Groups, people pray for and care about one another. Life Groups are a great place to build community.

7. **Culture** — We believe in engaging the culture and redeeming it for the glory of Christ.

Churches are notorious for being behind the culture. They are notorious for not wanting to change. Churches are great at being relevant to people who are already dead or people who are almost dead. At CrossWinds, we don't want to be that way. We want to understand our culture and engage our culture. We

want to redeem our culture and use it for the glory of Jesus. This is why we have a coffee bar. Personally, I don't care about coffee, but people in our culture do. This is why we sing songs the way we do. We want to sing the style of music that our culture understands. This is why we have a church app. Each of us spends tons of time on our phone. We are using apps all day. We use phones and the Internet to engage our culture and share the gospel message.

These are some of our core values. I am not going to spent time on the rest of them this morning. If you are interested in learning more, sign up for the membership class and Pastor Shane or I will walk you through the rest of them.

This morning, we are looking at the elders' 5-year vision. Where does that vision fit into the equation? The elders have prayerfully identified seven areas of church life they want to intentionally focus on for the next five years. They believe focusing on these seven areas will help us better achieve our mission of reaching people with Jesus. They will help us live in better alignment with our core values. Our mission is permanent. Our core values are permanent. The elders' 5-year vision is temporary. It is only for five years. These are action items the elders want us to take in order to better live out our mission and core values. There is a handout in your bulletin with the elders' 5-year vision on it. Let's read through these seven points together.

1. We are tirelessly focused on reaching people with Jesus, willing to leave the 99 for the one.

The elders want to develop a much greater heart for the lost on both of our campuses. We do not want to be a church focused on reaching other Christians.

We do not want to be a church that grows by soaking up all the other dissatisfied customers from other churches. We want to reach lost people with Jesus. We want to introduce people to Jesus. Our hope and prayer is that we would grow by new Christians.

2. We have made space for new people to serve and lead.

Our goal in this area is we want to empower and encourage younger leaders. Churches are typically led by older people. There is wisdom with older mature Christians but we do not want to push out younger church leaders God is raising up. We want to empower and encourage them.

3. We always have spots for people to plug into healthy, vibrant sermon-based Life Groups.

When someone is new to the church, after Sunday morning, we want the next place they plug in at CrossWinds to be a Life Group. In Life Groups we pray with one another and for one another. In Life Groups, we find a place to belong. We go from just a name to a person that is cared about and loved.

Unfortunately, right now most of our Life Groups are closed. That means they are not interested in adding new people. What happens if God answers our prayers and there are new Christians coming to CrossWinds and they need Life Groups where people can disciple them, answer their questions, and help them grow in Christ? We need open Life Groups that are ready for new Christians!

This will be an important focus for the future.

4. We are known as a church that loves on the communities it serves in tangible ways. People know us for the things we do outside the four walls of the church building.

We want to be known as a church that gives to our community, rather than a church that takes from our community. If the only way people experience CrossWinds is by walking through the doors, that is not good. We want to be involved in the community so we are rubbing shoulders with people who need to meet Jesus. We want the first way people are introduced to CrossWinds to be outside of these walls, not just inside of these walls. That may mean we need to cut back on some things we do inside the church so we can better serve people outside the church.

5. We are the best neighbors our neighbors have ever had. We seek to have neighborhoods so connected that people turn down promotions in order to stay where their families are so loved and supported.

Just as we give to our community, we want to be great servants of the neighbors God put next to us. Young families often move into the community. They become part of CrossWinds, but they take a job promotion and move out of the community. We want to be such good neighbors and such a healthy church family that people are willing to turn down promotions to stay in the area because CrossWinds Church is such a positive influence in their lives.

6. We change and give up what we like for the sake of others. We are known as a church that embraces change.

We want change to be a regular part of life at CrossWinds. Some things will never change at CrossWinds Church. The gospel will never change. The Bible being our foundation will never change. We will always keep our fingers in the text. We should expect the carpet will change. Paint will change. The way we structure our services may change. We are used to our culture changing all the time. We want to be a church that is comfortable with change in areas where we should flex.

7. We ask big things from people because we expect big things from God.

We do not want to be known as a church that plays it safe. We want to be church that takes bold and courageous moves for Jesus. We want to be a church that makes a difference in our community, not just marks time in our community.

One example of asking big things from people and expecting big things from God in the past is when we launched our Spencer Campus. I remember that elder meeting when we went over the budget. It looked impossible. If giving didn't immediately kick in, I would need to leave staff go and cut ministries dramatically. It was amazing watching God provide. God provided the funds to make paychecks at the right time. Here we are a few years later with a thriving Spencer Campus, and we paid cash for their new building. God came through in a big way. What an amazing story. We want to be a church with many stories like that in the future.

These are the seven things Jordan and I will teach on for the next four weeks. Today, we are focusing on just the first point because this one is so important. All of the other points flow from this first point.

1. We are tirelessly focused on reaching people with Jesus, willing to leave the 99 for the one.

What I want to do this morning is look at this theme in the Bible. In particular, I would like to look at Luke 15 to see what the Bible tells us about God's heart for lost people.

As we get started, let me be blunt. It is very easy for churches — CrossWinds included — to lose a heart for the lost. It is easy to go to church for years and only talk about Jesus at church with church friends. After years, it is easy to cut all our non-Christian friends out of our lives. It is easy to attend church for years but never tell anyone about Jesus. It is easy to attend church but never invite anyone to church. It is easy to go to church, say Jesus is the most important thing in the world but not have a heart for the lost.

This is especially true in our current cultural environment where everyone is told to keep their faith a private thing. That way we never talk about Jesus in public. When we turn to Luke 15, we find our privatized faith challenged.

What is the background of Luke 15 we need to know?

Let's begin with a little background on Luke 15. Luke 15 is a very unique parable.

Luke 15 is the center parable of Jesus' Judean ministry. It is the longest and one of Jesus' greatest parables.

First, we see Luke 15 is placed in a central section of Luke. The gospel of Luke divides into different sections. Jesus' ministry in Judea is Luke 9:48 to 19:42. In the dead center of all of Jesus' Judean ministry, rising like a mountain peak in the middle is one of Jesus' greatest parables in Luke.

Luke 15 is the only triple parable. It is three stories making one point.

This is Jesus' only story parable. It is one parable but put into three stories. The same point is made in all three stories. Why did Jesus repeat himself? When we are reading a book, and we find something important, we underline it. If it is super important, we underline it more than one time. Jesus, when he was speaking, did not have the ability to underline important things. What he did was repeat important points to drive them home, just like your mother did when she was teaching you. She repeated herself many times. This is what Jesus did in Luke 15, he made the same point three times in three different stories to drive his point home.

What is the point Jesus was making in this parable? How wants us to know how much God loves lost people. He wants us to know how much God cares about lost people. He wants us to know one of the greatest joys in heaven is when the lost are found.

The great joy of heaven is when the lost are saved.

The three stories that make this important parable in Luke 15 are the story of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. We won't have time to look at all three stories this morning. We will only look at the first two stories. You will look at the third story, the story of the lost son, this week in Life Group.

I do want to briefly show you the conclusion of all three stories so you see they are all making the same point. The first parable is the parable of the lost sheep. It ends this way:

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7 (ESV)

The second parable is the parable of the lost coin. It ends this way.

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10 (ESV)

The third parable is the parable of the lost son. It ends this way.

It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found. Luke 15:32 (ESV)

There is no question that our God has a great heart for the lost. There is no question that God celebrates in heaven whenever those who are lost repent, trust in Jesus, and are born again. This is what brings great joy to God.

Before we look at the story of the lost sheep and the lost coin in this parable, let's look at the opening two verses which frame the parable.

Luke 15:1-2 — Jesus ate with sinners.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Luke 15:1-2 (ESV)

These verses help us understand the conflict Jesus was facing. The Pharisees and scribes hated people who were far from God. They looked down on them. They avoided them. They could not stand tax collectors and sinners. They bristled in their presence and could never say a kind word when they spoke about them.

Jesus had a different approach. Rather than avoiding tax collectors and sinful people who were far from God, Jesus went out of his way to spend time with them. He ate with them. Let's briefly look at one time he did that.

And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. Luke 5:29 (ESV)

We also know Levi as Matthew. He eventually wrote the Gospel of Matthew, which is the first book in the New Testament. He started as a tax collector. It is a good thing Jesus was willing to spend time with him. It is a good thing Jesus was willing to eat with him. Those meals transformed Matthew's life.

While Jesus ate with Levi and his tax collecting buddies, the Pharisees and scribes avoided people like Levi. They treated Levi like he had COVID and wasn't wearing a mask. They wouldn't just avoid eating with people like Levi, they avoided even talking with people like Levi.

At this point, you are probably wondering why tax collectors were so despised by the Jews in general and the Pharisees and scribes in particular. Tax collectors were Jews who agreed to work for the hated Romans. Tax collectors were Jews who took taxes from their own people and gave it to the Romans. Tax collectors were well paid, but it was a socially devastating life. They had absolutely no friends. They were shunned in public. Nobody talked with them. Everybody hated them. They were outcasts. They were barred from the synagogue. They couldn't go to worship. Their only friends were other tax collectors. Maybe the best way to think about them in our culture is like a drug dealer. All the good and upstanding citizens avoid drug dealers. The only friends a drug dealer has is other drug dealers.

Jesus was different. Rather than avoiding people who were hated like Levi, he intentionally spent time with people like Levi, even eating with them. Look how the Pharisees and scribes reacted to Jesus doing this.

And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” Luke 19:7 (ESV)

They gossiped about Jesus, accusing him of being a drunk because he hung around people far from God.

The Pharisees and scribes would only spend their time with other Pharisees and scribes. They were a close group and a closed group, the religious elite.

I realize this is uncomfortable, but aren't we like this today? As Christians, don't we like to only spend time around other Christians? Don't we avoid people who are struggling in life and far from God? That is the way the Pharisees and scribes lived in Jesus' day. Quite honestly, that is the way most of us live today. We cut out of our lives people who desperately need Jesus. We don't have a heart for the lost. We are more like the Pharisees and scribes than Jesus.

The Pharisees were so notorious in this, they even created a rule in the Mishnah that reminded them to stay away from people struggling in life.

Let not a man associate with the wicked, not even to bring him nearer to the law. — Mishnah

This was not helpful. In order to keep themselves away from people who desperately needed Jesus, they cut out of their lives everyone who was spiritually needy. That is a terrible thing! They were more concerned with not brushing against them than they were about saving people caught in a web of sin.

One way everyone could see this is when it came to meals. Eating with someone in the ancient world was a way you expressed your approval of them, your acceptance of them. If you cared about someone, you ate lunch with them.

Pharisees and scribes would not be caught dead eating with a tax collector. They would only eat with someone of equal or greater social standing. Jesus was the opposite. Instead of worrying about being contaminated by sinful people, he ate with people struggling in life to bring God to these people. This is what put him in hot water with the religious leaders.

We are not even into the first parable and Luke 15 is already rebuking us. How much do we care about lost people? At CrossWinds, how intentional are we about reaching the lost people in our community to tell them about Jesus? How much have we isolated ourselves so we only spend time with other Christians? Let's look at the first parable.

The Lost Sheep

Each of these parables follows the same story line. We see something is lost. It is sought. It is found. It is celebrated.

Lost

So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?" Luke 15:3–4 (ESV)

This is a parable about a shepherd. Shepherds were the lowest of the low in society. They were considered the scum of the earth. They were considered lowlifes, outcasts, and unclean. They were on the bottom of the social scale. Incidentally, this is what made it so amazing that Jesus' birth was first announced to shepherds in the Gospel of Luke. They were considered nobodies. This is a reminder that Jesus didn't come to save special people. He came to save ordinary people like you and me.

Jesus then asked them to imagine they had a hundred sheep. This was not usually the amount of sheep a single person possessed. Families typically had as many as 15 sheep. This was a group flock, a community flock. These shepherds would have come from the community. They were low on the social scale. With a hundred sheep, there were probably two or three shepherds tending to the flock.

If you are a shepherd, there is really only one line in your job description. That is to not lose the sheep. You must protect the sheep and bring all of them home.

Sought

If you get back to the village, and suddenly realize you lost a sheep, nobody would say, "Well at least I have 99. Win some and lose some." Shepherds didn't do that. They were responsible for the sheep. That was somebody's sheep. Once a shepherd realized a sheep was missing, he left the flock in a safe place, usually with other shepherds, and immediately began retracing his steps, looking for the missing sheep. He brought a lantern. He brought a jacket. HE kept looking all night long to find the sheep. For a shepherd, it didn't matter how long it took to find the sheep, the shepherd was expected to work tirelessly and relentlessly until the sheep was found. It was unthinkable that a shepherd would leave a sheep in the wilderness by itself. No sacrifice would be too great, no time or effort would be too long. That is what it meant to be a shepherd. Sheep don't evaporate. It was out there. The shepherd just needed to find it. Sometimes the shepherd brought the sheep back alive.

Sometimes the shepherd brought back the sheep's dead body. The good shepherd kept relentlessly looking, even if just one sheep was missing.

It was good to have shepherds that tirelessly searched. Sheep didn't last long in the wilderness by themselves. They are defenseless. If a sheep with thick wool falls over on its side, it cannot get up. It will die. Sheep are also very timid. When they realize they are lost in the wilderness, they will sometimes lay down and die of fear. They are so scared, they will never get up. This is why a shepherd needed to tirelessly search for a lost sheep before the window of hope was lost.

Found

And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Luke 15:5 (ESV)

When a shepherd finally found the lost sheep, he would take a leather strap and bind the feet together. He would then put the sheep on his shoulders with the bound feet in front of his chest. That is the way he would carry the sheep home. This was not an easy task. A sheep weighs 70-75 pounds. This was a lot of weight to a young and often small shepherd to carry on his shoulders. The shepherd carried this burden with joy. He was thrilled that he found the lost sheep. He couldn't wait to get home and let everyone else know.

Celebrated

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Luke 15:6 (ESV)

After carrying the heavy sheep on his shoulders, the shepherd arrived home. He would have come home to a hero's welcome. The family would have

been waiting. The village would have been waiting. Everyone would have cheered that the sheep came home alive.

As I was thinking about this, it reminded me of what happens in our home with the family pet. We have a mini Dachshund. I have told you about her. She is 8 pounds of attitude. What makes her unique is that she is a hound. Hounds follow their noses. Sometimes we put her out the front door for her bathroom break. We look for her a minute later, and she is gone. She picked up a scent. Nobody knows where she went. When she follows a scent, everyone in the house starts looking for her. She could be at the pond in the high grass. Sometimes she is at the neighbor's house. Everyone joins the search-and-rescue operation. When someone finds her, he or she is thrilled. That person lets everyone know and we are happy to call off the search.

If you think we are thrilled when a lost dog is found, imagine how much more joy was experienced when a lost sheep was found.

Now Jesus got to the application.

Application

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7 (ESV)

Jesus told us there is more joy in heaven when a sinner repents than the 99 who do not need to repent. If you think it is incredibly important to go out of your way to look for a lost sheep, to stay up all night, to experience the cold and the dampness to find a lost sheep, how much more important is it to look like that for a lost person?

There is more joy in heaven for a lost person who is found and repents of his or her sin than anything the 99 righteous who no longer need to repent of their sin will do.

If God is filled with joy when the lost are found, why did the Pharisees and scribes want nothing to do with these people? If God is filled with joy when these people are saved, why won't we spend time with these people? Jesus said that if we are more concerned with the 99 who are not lost than the one who is lost, our heart is not in sync with the heart of God. We are more like a tax collector and scribe than we are Jesus.

Let's remember why Jesus came.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10 (ESV)

I was in a meeting this past week and someone asked about a cross. Where are you going to put a cross in this room was the question. In one sense, that is a good thing. The cross has become the symbol of Christian faith over time. It wasn't always that way. Once in a while, especially among Gentile Christians, the symbol of the faith was a fish. There is a symbol Christians used that began even earlier than the cross or the fish. It fell out of vogue because it was too hard to draw. The earliest Christian symbol was an outline of a shepherd carrying a sheep on his back. That was the earliest symbol of the church. It meant that we were lost, but God sought us. We were helpless to save ourselves, but God picked us up and carried us to safety. It reminded people that we have no way to get ourselves to heaven, but Jesus picked us up and carried us there. Jesus is the good shepherd who sought me when I was lost, found me when I was helpless, and brought me home to God.

We are called to be good shepherds like Jesus. We are to seek those who are lost. We are to pick them up when they are broken. We are to carry them to Jesus, the only one who can bring anyone safely home to heaven.

Let me ask you, as a Christian, how many people that do not know Christ are you intentionally spending time with so you can tell them about Jesus? Are the only friends you have in your life Christian friends? If so, we are walking in the shoes of the Pharisees and scribes, not Jesus.

As the elders discussed this, we feel that this is an area we need to address as a church family. We need to make CrossWinds a place that is especially welcoming for those who do not know Christ. As people, we need to be on mission to reach and invite people who do not know Jesus to come in the door. If we fail in this area, we are out of sync with the heart of Jesus, the one who spent time with tax collectors and sinners.

What changes will we make? I don't know at this point. We have five years to figure it out.

Luke 15:8-10 — The Lost Coin

To drive the point home, Jesus told a story about a lost coin. The setting is once again life in a small village. The houses were the houses of the poor in that day. They were made of mud bricks and straw. In this story, we meet a woman with 10 silver coins.

In the last story, the shepherds were the outcasts in society. They were the ones searching for a lost sheep. Pharisees and scribes hated to think of themselves as a lonely shepherd. In this story, Jesus asked them to think of themselves as a woman. In the culture of that day, especially among men like the

Pharisees and scribes, women were not highly esteemed. They didn't have a high value in society. The Pharisees said women were not allowed to learn the Bible. In fact, one of the morning prayers a Pharisee regularly prayed was:

God I thank you for not making me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. — Morning Blessings, Artscroll Siddur, p. 12.

Here again we have someone the Pharisees would have despised seeking what was of value and joy when it was found.

Lost

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?” Luke 15:8 (ESV)

Picture a little village. Picture a dusty road. Picture a little mud brick hut with a dirty floor. Picture a dark house with no windows. Here we have a woman who lost one of 10 silver coins someplace in the house. The Greeks called these coins drachma. The Romans called them a denarius. Each of them was the equivalent of a day's wages. This was not a lot of money, but in the case of this woman, it was all the money she had. Typically coins like this would have been wrapped in a piece of cloth and hidden. The cloth functioned as a type of purse. Hiding it among other clothes functioned as a primitive security system.

It is also possible these coins were this woman's dowry, the price her husband paid for her. Some women would wear a little bag with this money around their necks. It was a type of emergency fund if their husband died or disaster happened in the family. At least they had cash to survive. Whatever it was one in 10 of these coins was a significant amount of money, especially for an extremely poor woman.

Sought

What would any woman do in this case? There was only one option. She would sweep the floor. She would move every piece of furniture. She would light the lamp and check every dark corner. She would turn every piece of that house upside down until she found the money.

As I was thinking of what this would be like today, it reminded me of a woman losing her wedding ring. Ladies, has that ever happened to you?

Cindy once lost her ring. She was helping at school and was dressed up in a bear costume the school provided. After an afternoon in the bear costume, when she came home, she noticed her wedding ring was gone. She went into a panic. She started checking everywhere. She notified everyone in the school. She had most of the school looking for her ring. She was upset as she kept looking for days. We eventually found it. It was in the vegetable tray of the refrigerator. If we would learn to eat more vegetables, we would have found it sooner. This is the woman in our story. She was turning everything upside down looking for the lost coin.

Found

And when she has found it... Luke 15:9 (ESV)

The good news is she eventually found it. This was before the age of social media. Can you imagine what would happen on social media if this took place today? Can you imagine how many comments and likes she would have received on her lost coin posts?

Celebrated

...she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Luke 15:9 (ESV)

By the way, we might wonder what friends she called. In the Greek, the word "friends" is in the feminine tense. This means she called her girlfriends over for a party. Finding her lost coin was that big of a deal. She was so happy about it she threw a party.

Application

Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10 (ESV)

First we saw there was more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than 99 righteous who do not need to repent. Here we see there is joy before the angels of God when one sinner repents. We need to read this carefully. Does it say the angels are rejoicing when someone repents? No. It says there is joy in the presence of the angels. It is God who is celebrating, not the angels.

If you like football, you know what it is like to root for your team in a tense moment of a game. There is 15 seconds left. Your team is behind. Your quarterback throws a hail-mary pass to your favorite receiver who makes an amazing catch, winning the game. You and about 6 million other people watching the game come off the couch cheering for the victory. If you know that moment of victory, you know what God feels like the moment a person who is far from God repents and is born again.

Once again, God places incredibly high value on people being saved. The problem is the longer a church is around the easier it is for every church to act like Pharisees and scribes. They become more concerned with themselves than

having a heart for the lost. They reduce joy in heaven instead of building joy as they keep away from people that desperately need to know God's love for them.

Conclusion

Friends, as the elders have thought and prayed about CrossWinds' future, Jesus' love for the lost has been heavy on our hearts. Jesus loved to eat with tax collectors and sinners. We don't want to be like the religious people of Jesus' day and avoid tax collectors and sinners. We do not want CrossWinds to be a church that is safe for us. We want CrossWinds to be a church that is reaching the lost. That is the heart of our God. That is the heart we want to have.

I don't know what will change in the next five years as we set ourselves on a course to reach more people far from God. Paint may change. The carpet may change. The way we do things may change. Those are easy changes. The hardest thing to change and the most important thing to change is right in the center of our chests. It is our hearts. We have to care more about lost people than we care about ourselves.

Bumper Video Closer

It is not about me. It is not about the 99. It is about the one. God's heart is for the one who is lost. And that is why we must be for the 1. A for-the-one mindset changes how we do things. It provides us with focus. It should drive us to lay aside anything that hinders us from finding the lost and embracing only those things that help us. This doesn't mean we should abandon gathering together, Christian education, or other worthwhile pursuits. But, if we do them at the expense of seeking the lost or they do not help us prepare to reach the lost, we should either change them or stop doing them. Let's encourage each other to be for the one. We are for the one so that we can reach them with Jesus.



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