

## WEEK OF AUGUST 20



DAY  
1

### **Lost and Found** **Luke 15:1-7**

Have you ever lost something? Sometimes we lose something inconsequential and once we realize it's lost, we just shrug and say, "Oh well." Other times, we grieve over what we have lost and what we might never get back.

Luke 15 is all about lost things. Later in the chapter, there is an additional parable about lost sons. We experience "lostness" from God in many different ways. Oftentimes, we are lost because of our own bad decisions, or because of foolishness or acting in ways that are contrary to what God wants for his children. Sometimes we are alienated from God because we have been victimized by someone. Sometimes we experience lostness because we are following patterns that were set for us by our families of origin and we've never asked God to help us live another way. All of us experience lostness. All of us need to be found. All of us need to experience our loving Father.

Once, when one of my children was very young, I lost him at a baseball game. One moment he was playing with his cousins in the seats, and the next moment, he was gone. Those few moments before he was found (a few sections away, looking for the bathroom) were terrifying. I felt such an overwhelming sense of relief when he was found! Think about how much more relief God feels when he finds us. There is joy in being found.

DAY  
2

### **Alienation to Abiding** **Ephesians 4:17-24; John 15:5-8**

At this point in the summer, my garden is overflowing with cucumbers, thanks to a rather impressive (and aggressive) collection of vines. It is a beautiful picture of the fruit that a vine can produce when it is abiding well.

Ephesians 4 paints a rather stark picture of what it is like to live in alienation from God. Compare that to the lovely picture of abiding that is presented in John 15. Once, we experienced alienation from God. We, too, were far from him. Think about your own experiences of alienation from God. What did that feel like? How did you realize that you needed/currently need to return to him?

Now, compare those feelings to the words in John 15. We remain in God, bearing fruit, receiving God's blessing. The New Testament was written to a group of people who would have been very familiar with farming and growing food. The growth of plants is dependent upon a good connection to their source, the soil. Similarly, sin keeps us from rooting well into our source, God. Alienation keeps us from flourishing, but a life of abiding allows us to flourish.

**DAY**  
**3**

## **Alienation from Ourselves**

### **1 Samuel 17**

We frequently pretend to be something that we are not. On social media, it's easy to present a slick version of your life, crop out the uglier parts, use a filter, and make things look so much better than they actually are. We talk up our accomplishments, make our job sound more impressive than it is, and only present the happier parts of our families. It's easy to ignore the uglier parts of ourselves. Sin has even alienated us from ourselves.

Our passage for today was the story of David and Goliath. When David confronted Goliath, he knew who he was. He wasn't like the other soldiers. He wasn't trained like them. He was smaller than them. But David knew how God had made him, and he trusted God. As Peter Scazzero writes, "This knowledge of himself and of God frees not only him from all the pressures around him, it frees everyone around him!"

It is all too easy to lie to ourselves. But true knowledge of God helps us to see ourselves clearly, too. We don't have to pretend because we can be sure in the love of God and sure about the good works he has planned for us to do. Make your prayer like Augustine, who writes, "Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know Thee."

**DAY**  
**4**

## **Alienation from One Another**

### **Genesis 3:7-11; Matthew 9:36; 2 Corinthians 5:18**

From the very first sin, sin has destroyed relationships. Just look what happened to Adam and Eve. Immediately, they started blaming one another, blaming the serpent, anything but looking inward.

Sin is still doing the same thing in our relationships today. We are selfish, we look out for our own interests, we trample others for our own gain, we don't easily forgive, we hold grudges, the list goes on and on. We see others as enemies, threats, problems, anything but other human beings created in the image of God.

Compare how you view others with the way Jesus saw the crowds in Matthew. Jesus looks on people, on us, with compassion. He is aware of the needs of those in the crowd.

Finally, read 2 Corinthians 5:18. God has called us to a ministry of reconciliation. We are called to heal what is broken in the world. Are there relationships in your life that have been damaged? What does reconciliation look like for you? Pray for God to give you wisdom about what to do.

# PERSONAL REFLECTION & LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION

*You can always pick any idea from the sermon or the daily readings and biblical passages and talk about those ideas. A good format is to have each LifeGroup member share one idea that was most powerful for them.*

**DAY 1:** How have you experienced lostness in your own life? How have you been found? Where are you still in need of being found?

**DAY 2:** How is sin keeping you from rooting into Jesus? Is there any part of the Ephesians passage that you feel describes you? What jumps out at you from John 15? Do you need accountability in your life to help you grow? What does abiding look like for you in this season?

**DAY 3:** How has sin alienated you from yourself? Do you struggle to see yourself clearly? Why or why not? How has knowing God changed how you view yourself?

**DAY 4:** How has your sin caused alienation from others? What did you learn through that situation? Are there relationships in your life that need the healing touch of God? What might God be asking you to do to seek reconciliation?