

LOST, PART 2 - LOST AND ALONE

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

2 Corinthians 4:4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

Last week, we started this new series called LOST. You've probably heard somebody talking about the current award-winning TV series by the same name. We're not here to promote it, because it has all the junk and trappings of Hollywood like most of the other TV offerings out there. However, we are here to ask this question: "Why does a series like 'Lost' resonate so clearly with such a large audience?"

We've always been fascinated with the subject. From classic literature like Swiss Family Robinson and Robinson Crusoe to long-running comedies like Gilligan's Island to modern films like Castaway, the scenario of people being stranded somewhere through no fault of their own resonates with us. Lost in a place where their surroundings are full of danger and uncertainty. Lost in a place where, regardless of who else is around, every single day is preoccupied with two all-consuming passions ... I must survive, and I must find a way to be rescued.

The premise for the new series is a frightening one. Oceanic Air flight 815 tears apart in midair and crashes on a Pacific island. Stripped of everything, its survivors are forced into a vicious existence in cruel weather and harsh terrain. They discover that the island holds many mysterious and dangerous secrets, not the least of which is wondering if those they are marooned with may turn against them at any moment! Some panic. Some pin all their hopes on rescue. Some retaliate against others. Some fall into isolation and depression. A few find inner strength they never knew they had. The characters seem familiar, almost like people we should know ...

- a young singer who has wrecked his career due to a drug addiction
- a couple who feels isolated because they are of a different race
- a woman who desperately tries to hide her criminal past
- a father and son who have never really gotten to know each other
- a nice guy who does his best to help everyone else
- a soldier who is haunted by his sadistic cruelty to others in the past
- a reckless drifter who instinctively mistrusts those around him
- a wealthy young woman whose world revolves only around herself
- a workaholic who has never been able to get his father's approval

Just a TV show, right? But is real life all that different? We ARE these people! **We feel LOST ... and being "lost" is our deepest fear.**

Producer J.J. Abrams said: "If 'Lost' works at all, it's because the audience and the characters want to know the answers to the same questions. The mysteries that we're grappling with while watching the show are the same ones they're grappling with."

We use the word "lost" as a **verb** in a thousand casual ways every day – he lost his keys, she lost her job, he lost his wife, she lost her temper, they lost the game, we lost the contract. But we more commonly use it as an **adjective**, to describe what it means and how it feels to be lost ...

- Unable to find the way – a lost child.
- No longer under someone's care – a lost pen.
- Wasted – lost youth.
- No longer practiced – a lost art.
- Beyond reach – a lost expedition.
- Squandered – a lost opportunity.
- Not likely to win – a lost battle
- Distracted – lost in thought.
- Bewildered – I'm lost.
- ***Beyond redemption – a lost soul.***

Does that last definition haunt you? It should ... because either you are lost, or you know someone who is. Not lost on an island, but for eternity.

Jesus came to seek and to save the LOST. That was His mission; he talked about it constantly. In Luke 15, he even told a trilogy of stories about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son ... just so people could grasp how eternally important this is.

Luke 15:8-10 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Last week, we talked about the lost sheep ... an animal lost because of its wandering, lost because of its own foolishness. Lost because it followed its appetite and went astray, lost because it nibbled its way further and further from the shepherd. Lost because it thought the grass was greener in another pasture. The sheep had absolutely no idea just how lost it was until it was too late, and then it became afraid. But the one good thing about the sheep is that it began to cry out, and the shepherd was able to leave the ninety and nine and eventually find it.

At least that dumb sheep had the intelligence to know it was LOST.

But today, we want to talk about the second of Jesus' parables – the lost COIN. Just like the parable of a sheep wandering from the sheepfold would resonate with the people of Jesus' day, this story also had great significance and impact. When a Jewish girl married, she was given a headband (“semedi”) of ten silver coins to signify that she was now a wife. It was the ancient version of our modern wedding ring, and it would be considered a calamity for her to lose one of those coins. The windows in ancient homes were small so it was quite dark inside. That's why she had to light a lamp and search until she found the lost coin, and that's why there was such great joy when she located it. Let's look closely ...

THE COIN WAS VALUABLE TO ITS OWNER.

Coins in ancient times bore the image of the ruler (Luke 20:24), much like today. Every sinner was created in the image of God, but that image has been “lost” due to sin. When the coin slipped out of the woman's possession, it had no value *because the owner had no control over it.*

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

THE COIN WAS LOST BECAUSE OF CARELESSNESS.

The woman was obviously not paying enough attention to this treasured heirloom, because she lost it in the dirt floor of the house. It would have been very difficult to find in the dim light. She was simply too careless!

Hebrews 2:1, 3a Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip ... How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ...

THE COIN WAS LOST IN THE HOUSE.

The coin was not lost in the wilderness (like the sheep), but lost even though very close at hand. Although it was “in the house” it was buried in the dirt! Although it was “in the house” it lay dormant. Although it was “in the house” *it was not in the owner's possession.* The bridal dowry was incomplete and lacking without it. The coin had the same appearance as the other nine, but it was not in its proper place so it was *lost.*

Hebrews 10:28-31 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

THE COIN WAS FOUND BY DILIGENT SEARCHING.

The woman was not content to just have nine coins out of ten. Ten is the number of *responsibility* in Scripture (the Ten Commandments, the ten virgins, the ten pounds, etc.) – she had to have the desire to search for what she had lost! She lit a lamp (Psalm 119:130), *because light is needed to discover that which is lost.* And she swept the dirt floor with a broom, because she needed to *disturb the dirt* to find the coin!

Hosea 10:12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

2 Timothy 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

AS LONG AS THE COIN WAS LOST, IT WAS ALONE.

There is no place lonelier than being AROUND the church without being PART of the church. To be LOST means to be “out of place” – that's how we feel when our external religion does not match our internal reality. Sheep and coins and sons were not meant to be LOST AND ALONE – they were meant to be part of a sheepfold, a dowry, and a family that is much bigger than them. Otherwise, their purpose remains unfulfilled.

ARE YOU LOST? No sense of direction. No familiar landmarks. You don't know how to get home, because you don't know where you are. A map serves little help if you do not know the starting point. You can look at a map and see where you THINK you are and where you want to go, but until you KNOW where you are, you will not be able to get where you need to go. **The good news is that the starting point is repentance.**

Lamentations 3:40-41 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

It's not enough for you to go through the motions. **Lift up your heart with your hands!** Seek the Lord diligently, passionately, regularly!

Isaiah 55:6-7 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

God ... and God's family ... are waiting to welcome you back!