

REFLECTION OF GRACE

A Weekly Reflection on Stewardship from our Members



Sunday, September 11 | Gospel
Luke 15: 1-10



All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' 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.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

GRACE: LOST AND FOUND

By Gene Putnam

What is lost and what is found? Who is lost and who is found? This is a recurring theme in scripture, and in this week's gospel reading. The lost sheep, the lost coin. In fact, if more emphasis is needed, the theme is repeated a third time later in the same chapter with the story of the lost, or prodigal, son. Similar lost/found language is found in each of the gospels. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." These thoughts are also in some of our hymns, notably in *Amazing Grace*. *I once was lost, but now am found/was blind but now I see.*

The gospel lesson captures the stress and anxiety of having lost something important and precious and the great relief and joy when we find what was lost. It captures the emotion of the somewhat out-of-fashion concept of being "saved". And, on the other side of the coin, is the despair of being lost.

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Or, think of something most of us can relate to stories of lost or missing children, some recovered and some not. In other words, the stakes couldn't be higher.

Grace, by one definition, is "favor, freely given". The Church, imperfect as it is, is where we hope to find grace, where we may find grace. Or, looked at another way, where grace may find us. It's where we extend God's grace to others. It's where we receive sinners and eat with them, and where we are received.

This *Reflection of Grace* is part of a series---so it has an important context. Other reflections precede and follow it. Based on the testimonies and the recent reflections, of many members, Ascension is where what was lost has been found.

Question for Reflection:

Loss is an inevitable part of life. Can you think of something hopelessly lost, that you unexpectedly found again at, or through, Ascension?

Gene Putnam has been a member of Ascension since 2007. He is retired from the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. At Ascension, he is currently participating on the Safety Committee. He is married to Katie Dickinson and they have two sons, a daughter-in-law, and a new grandson.

