

“Have you checked the Lost and Found lately?”

Sermon notes by Pastor Dan Harrison (10/15/17)

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. *Luke 15:11-24*

I. Introduction – choose the parachute!

II. Demonstrating Love –

a. Allowing for mistakes to be made

b. Showing how much you truly care:

i. Fathers love their kids (bond is real) ->

ii. The father-son dynamic. Frank Pittman,

Psychology Today: “The pain and grief and shame from the failed father-son relationship seem universal, as evidenced in the popular movies of the past few decades which had father-and-son themes... Men feared being like their fathers, but they wanted desperately to bond with them even if they could never really please them enough to feel anointed. In 1989, the film that set the tone for the Men’s Movement was *Field of Dreams*. Baseball, with its clear and polite rules and all its statistics and players who are normal men and boys rather than oversized freaks, is a man’s metaphor for life. In this magical fantasy, Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) tells us his life story: how his mother died when he was two so his father gave up his efforts to play pro baseball in order to raise his son. Costner hears a voice from his cornfield telling him “If you build it, he will come.” He understands the message to mean that if he mows his cornfield and builds a baseball diamond, his father’s hero, Joe Jackson, will appear. He does. Then Costner’s dad appears in his baseball uniform, and father and son solemnly play a belated game of catch. Father and son don’t talk much, they just play catch with total solemnity. And it is quite enough. What goes on between the father and son—and what does not go on between them—is surely the most important determinant of whether the boy will become a man capable of giving life to others or whether he will go through life ashamed and pulling back from exposure to intimacy with men, women, and children.”

iii. Middle Eastern culture and the demonstration of love in Jesus’ parable

III. From death to life, not an easy road: “²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was **lost** and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Fatherhood a positive experience and central to dads’ identity

% saying parenting is extremely important to their identity



% saying parenting is rewarding all of the time



% saying parenting is enjoyable all of the time



Source: Pew Research Center survey of parents with children under 18, Sept.15-Oct.13, 2015

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- a. Lost - ἀπώλεια - *apóleia* (from *apólymi*, "cut off") –*destruction*, causing someone (something) to be *completely severed* – cut off (entirely) from what *could or should* have been. Ruin or loss (physical, spiritual or eternal). Utter annihilation:
 - i. In Matthew 2:13, Herod wants to *kill* the baby Jesus.
 - ii. In Matthew 12:14 the Pharisees conspired together about how they might *kill* Jesus.
 - iii. In Matthew 21:41 (story of the wicked tenants) the vineyard owner *kills* the wicked tenants.
 - iv. In Matthew 27:20, the elders and chief priests urge the people to have Barabbas released and Jesus *killed*.
 - v. In Mark 3:6, the Pharisees plot to *kill* Jesus.
- b. Lost The word is linked to the Greek god Apollo ("I destroy"):
 - 1. Homer's *The Iliad*, opening scene: "*Apollo heard him. He came down from Olympus top enraged, carrying on his shoulders bow and covered quiver, his arrows rattling in anger against his arm. So the god swooped down, descending like the night. He sat some distance from the ships, shot off an arrow—the silver bow reverberating ominously. First, the god massacred mules and swift-running dogs, then loosed sharp arrows in among the troops themselves. Thick fires burned the corpses ceaselessly. For nine days Apollo rained death down upon the troops.*"
- c. Abaddon – Hebrew אַבְדּוֹן, "destruction" often used with "sheol" (hell)
- d. Back from the dead, from John Newton, former slave trader, to the slave fields:

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.*

IV. "So they began to celebrate" - Grace – "The unmerited favor of God toward man, or getting the opposite of what you deserve." -Grandpa Bill

- a. "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." -Jesus (Luke 23:34)
- b. Article in *The Atlantic* (June 20, 2015): "On Saturday, news broke that Dylann Roof, the 21-year-old charged with the murder of nine people in Charleston, South Carolina, had apparently published a lengthy manifesto on The Last Rhodesian, a website he registered in February, in which he described African Americans as genetically inferior to whites and defended legal segregation. The site, whose name refers to a former British colony governed by an apartheid regime, also contained images of Roof at plantations and in front of a Confederate museum in South Carolina—iconography of the state's history of slavery. In the months before his attack, Roof reportedly spoke often of his hatred toward blacks and his desire to ignite a "race war" in the United States. The manifesto, a seething catalog of hatred encompassing Jews, blacks, and Hispanics, feels quite plausibly like the work of a killer who spared one person's life reportedly so she could tell the world what he had done. The manifesto showcases a character markedly different from those the world saw on Friday, when several relatives of the nine people slain inside Charleston's historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church appeared in court and addressed Roof. The family members of the dead told Roof, a professed white supremacist, of their pain and anguish. But they also said they would forgive him. "I will never be able to hold her again, but I forgive you," a daughter of one victim said. "We have no room for hating, so we have to forgive," said the sister of another. "I pray God on your soul." Given the heinous nature of the crime, the willingness of Charleston's survivors to forgive was remarkable—and earned particular praise from President Obama. But the act of forgiving is more than just an expression of grace toward a wrongdoer. It's also an effective tool in helping individuals and communities touched by tragedy accelerate the healing process."

V. Celebrate, unashamedly – it is what our faith is all about (celebrate one another)