

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
September 11th, 2022, Pentecost XIV
Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28, Psalm 14, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Luke 15:1-10

The Parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the lost coin. The parable of the lost sheep follows what I've said from Richard Rohr that we are to love wastefully. The question is it taking the other 99 sheep for granted? And the squeaking wheel gets the oil? Sibling animosity and jealousy, the one having problems steals focus from the other one who is potentially the good one.

It is not a full scientific experiment, but when one child in the family has been bad and is expecting punishment, the other siblings are expecting the parents to punish their sibling fairly severely and are surprised and disappointed when the parents show more leniency and mercy.

In all honesty we are at times the lost sheep and the lost coin even though we may think and feel there are others a lot more lost than we are.

Unfortunately, we like to have competitions and boundaries, and focus more on our differences than what we have in common. We tend to think of those who are very lost as very different than we are, when in reality we are not so different.

Those we are in conflict with have a lot more in common with us than we realize. They may have a different view and ideology but may have a somewhat similar way of handling those with different views and ideologies.

How different are we then those we consider our enemies? Are we that much better? What are we comparing ourselves to?

A story I heard, but don't know where it came from goes something like this.

I was taking a train trip in the autumn sitting in the seat by a window, when we came around the bend and I saw a beautiful meadow with grass and trees and flowers. On hill partway up in the middle of the meadow was a house. It was a gorgeous sparkling white, offset by the bright green of the grass and the fall colours of the trees.

A while later during the winter, returning the same way by train, and again sitting by the window, I looked out upon the same meadow and house. the whole of the meadow was covered in snow, beautiful winter scene which rivalled the autumn scene I'd witnessed earlier. But the dazzling white house I'd seen in the fall didn't look so white. It was more of a dingy grey.

When we compare ourselves to others we can look like the house in the autumn, but when we look to God, we will look more like the house covered in snow.

But before we feel too bad about this, let us remember that God sees us all as both the house in the winter and the house in the autumn. And let us see ourselves and others as both as well.

Amen

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk with you on the road.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your hearts to love.

May you see the face of Christ in ev'ryone you meet,
And may ev'ryone you meet see the face of Christ in you. Amen.