

# The Stumbling Dance of the Lost

Community #3

January 16, 2022

**We exist to enjoy and share the love and message of God with everyone.**

## **DAY 1: Relating to the lost, through humility.**

1. God desires every person to relate in three communities: Community #1: the Trinity. We are invited to share in the delight and joy of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Community #2: The Church. We are God's people, but every Christian and church has a long way to go in reflecting the love and delight of the Trinity to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. This week we'll look at **how we are to relate** in Community #3: the lost community.

3. Jesus sends out His disciples on a mission trip. Here is an excerpt of His instructions:

*Matthew 10:16 "I am sending you out **like sheep among wolves**. Therefore **be as shrewd as snakes** and as **innocent as doves**.*

*<sup>17</sup> "Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. <sup>18</sup> On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.*

4. Jesus warns the men of the dangers they are likely to face.

a. What are the dangers in Matt. 10:17-18?

b. In Matt. 10:16, what image does He use to illustrate the nature of humanity they may face?

5. At the end of Matt. 10:16, Jesus gives them instructions as to how they are to relate to dangerous people. "Innocent as doves."

a. What **attitudes** would help us be "innocent as doves"?

b. How might this show up in relationship with dangerous people?

c. Jesus gives an image that is to drive their being innocent as doves. What is it?

6. What's striking is what He doesn't tell them--be confident, be assured, come across as having the answers, be self-righteous about the progress you've made, be defensive and argumentative.

7. How do you relate to lost people? Do you see yourself as a sheep? A dove?

## DAY 2: *Lost people*

1. In our fractured culture, it's easy to view lost people as "the enemy," as opponents of the faith, as people with whom we profoundly disagree. On occasion that may be true, but most of the time, lost people are simply preoccupied with the things of the world.

2. If we "see" people as "enemies" how would that affect:

a. How we **think** of them?

b. How we **relate** to them?

c. Our **attitudes** toward people?

3. Jesus had a different view of people that profoundly affected how He saw them, related to them. He saw their desire and hunger for unconditional love. They *liked* to be with Him! Luke 19:1-10 records Jesus reaching out to a despised tax collector named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus repented of His sin and became a follower of Christ. Jesus sums up how this happened, which included Jesus' attitude toward Zacchaeus, and how He thought of him.

*Luke 19:9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save **what was lost.**"*

4. Several years ago, I went running up in the mountains. On consecutive days, I got lost in the woods. I had thoughts of being attacked by a bear, of being on a mountain all night in the cold, without food or water, no one knowing where I was, etc.

a. Imagine you were a hiker, equipped with trail map, water, food, and compass. You come over a hill and run into me!

b. What would your attitude be toward me when you realized I was lost?

5. How would your attitude change toward non-Christians if instead of thinking of them as opponents or "the enemy" you thought of them as *lost* people?

### DAY 3: Lost people, part 2

*Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.*

*<sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."*

1. Jesus tells the first of three parables about something or someone who is lost. Before we look at this first parable, notice the setting for the three parables in Luke 15:1-2.

a. On a scale of 1-100, how much did the "dregs of society" want to be around Jesus and hear what He had to say?

b. Why do you think that was true?

c. The setting is contrasted with the religious leaders of the day who "*muttered*" a complaint about whom Jesus was keeping company. What words or phrases would you use to describe their attitudes toward the same people that wanted to hang around Jesus?

*<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?*

*<sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'*

*<sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*

2. What price is the shepherd willing to endure to find the lost sheep?

3. To Jesus, what is the value of the "one" lost sheep?

4. "Celebration" is a word we don't often use, today. What pictures of rejoicing does Jesus include in this parable?

5. Jesus gives the lesson of the story in Luke 15:7. What point is making about lost people?

6. How would you describe the value of lost people to you?

## **DAY 4: Relating to lost people.**

1. We've looked at what **our attitude** is to be toward lost people. They are not the enemy, or opponents.

2. Today, we'll look at how we're **to relate** to lost people.

*1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

*<sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

*<sup>17</sup> It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

3. In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter says to give answers to people with "gentleness..." Sadly, too many Christians can come across as anything but gentle. We are sometimes accused of being arrogant, self-righteous, "holier-than-thou," or condescending.

4. What "pictures" come to mind of gentleness?

5. What attitudes toward someone are needed in order to come across as gentle?

6. Peter also tells us to speak with "respect," which can also be translated as "reverence." What attitudes are needed toward someone in order to come across as respectful?

7. What attitudes do you think lost people pick up from you about them?

8. How would *they* describe your "gentleness" and "respect" toward them?

9. Finish today with prayer. Ask God to give you the same heart He has for people.

## **DAY 5: Relating to lost people--part 2**

*1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*<sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*<sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

1. As Christians, sometimes we sacrifice the best for the good. When we do, we can make some pretty big messes! It's one thing to believe you are a loving person. It's a completely different thing if the people you're relating to think you're loving!

a. In verse 1, Paul thinks about speaking the words of God with the finest of eloquence. That's certainly a good thing. But there is a problem. The people to whom you're speaking don't sense a love for them. What effect are you really having on them according to verse 1?

b. In verse 2, Paul speaks about folks that have incredible gifts! He lists four of them. What are they?

c. One problem. While these gifted people are using their gifts, the people with whom they are using their gifts do not sense a love for them! What effect does Paul say occurs in verse 2?

d. In verse 3, Paul describes some very committed Christians. What are these people willing to do or sacrifice for the cause of Christ?

e. One problem. In spite of exceptional sacrifice for others, the people do not sense love behind the sacrifice. What effect does Paul say occurs in verse 3?

2. As good as eloquence, gifts, and commitment obviously are, they are a very poor substitute for love. It is not enough to do any of these things at the expense of love!

3. Christians are sometimes accused of being rude, insensitive, only out for a convert, or having an air of superiority. This is a long way from feeling loved by Christians! How would the lost people grade your attitude toward them?