

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, July 12, 2024

Today is Friday, July 12 and we are learning what the Bible says about restoration.

## OPENING PRAYER

*As I enter a time of prayer, I pause and become still. I calm my mind and quiet my heart. I breathe deeply and slowly, and center myself upon the presence of my Lord and Shepherd. In utter trust and confidence, I turn to the God who loves me who has the power to restore my soul. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:8-10***

## REFLECTION

Today we revisit the New Testament Gospel of Luke where Jesus told three parables about being lost. Jesus was surrounded by tax collectors and sinners and the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law were disturbed that Jesus welcomed sinners even to the point of sharing a meal with them. In response to their frustration, Jesus told three parables, one about a lost sheep, one about a lost coin and one about a lost son. As I listen to the words of Jesus in the second parable, I ask God to help me see the story with fresh eyes and find myself in the passage.

There is great rejoicing in heaven over each individual repentant sinner who was lost and is found. I reflect on the enormous reality of Jesus finding me and I imagine angels rejoiced even for me. I was lost and now I am found. I don't feel completely lost anymore, as Jesus has surely found me and redeemed me. However, I acknowledge there are parts of me that still feel lost. Maybe I have lost friends or loved ones. Perhaps I have lost my courage or strength. Maybe I have lost hope, confidence, or optimism. Perhaps I have lost my ability to cope, or lost my strength or patience. Maybe I have lost my optimism, joy or happiness. Perhaps I have lost my motivation, self-discipline or inspiration. Maybe I have lost my innocence, my health, or my love. There is loss in life. Whatever I have lost, if it is something God wants me to have, then God will restore it. God is a God of restoration.

I notice that in both the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the lost coin, the sheep and the coin are helpless. They cannot return on their own and be restored without the help of a caring shepherd or a diligent woman with a light and a broom. When I consider the parts of me that are lost right now, I ask myself, can I recover these on my own, or do I need the help of someone else? Do I need the help of Jesus? I imagine being a coin that has rolled across the floor and lodged itself in a dark crevice, hidden from view. I ponder the things in my life I hide in

the dark. What parts of my life or behavior would I prefer remain hidden from the searching light? Do I want my missing pieces to be exposed? To be found? Or kept hidden and secret?

**Ask:** Lord God, reveal the pieces of me that I have lost. Show me the places of my life that have gone missing.

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and Loving God, nothing is hidden from your sight, nothing is beyond your grasp, even me, especially me. Lord, whether it is all of me or just a part of me that is somehow separated from you and lost, restore me and make me whole again. Through the power of your great love - find me. All of me. I confess the things in my heart that I want to keep secret, even from you. Help me to see how you want to restore me to complete wholeness because you love me, want the best for me and want to bless me. I invite you to shine your light on me, sweep the dust aside and expose what has become lost, missing or hidden. Restore me in your love. Amen.*