

September 11, 2022

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 15:1-10

The Gospel this morning is about inclusivity. That is the idea that all people are welcome. Jesus was very inclusive in His ministry because He welcomed everyone as a friend. Jesus ate and spent time with sinners, lepers, prostitutes and tax collectors. All the people that His society excluded and looked down upon. Jesus welcomed everyone especially the people society excluded.

Many times people forget that God is inclusive. God certainly must be, because He made all of us. We are inclusive to God as His children. We are part of a huge family as God's children. We should remember that we were created out of love and to love. We were made for good and to do good. Some people would say that goodness is our nature. Remember that after each day of creation God said, "and it was good." That is the nature of all that He created. For all of creation to be good and that includes you and I.

There are times when we go against the good nature that we were created out of. Those are the times when we misbehave or do bad things. The times when we get lost like the sheep in this morning's Gospel. Some people say that is when we do bad or act unnaturally. This brings us back to our first parable about the lost sheep. For one sheep to go astray or wander away from the flock is very unnatural. Sheep always stay with their herd. So for one sheep to stray is very odd and unnatural. Be warned, that just because we are Christians does not mean that we too cannot get lost or stray. Sometimes we can get lost; spiritually, physically, mentally or emotionally.

Do not worry, all is not lost. We should take great comfort in knowing that God cares for all of us. Even when we act in unnatural or sinful ways. We just need to stop and remember that God is always there for us and even comes looking for us. Most often God sends someone else to seek us out. It may be our: parents, brother or sister, friends a stranger or even a pastor! There are some very cool similarities between this story and the Prodigal Son. Both the lost sheep and the prodigal son acted in unnatural ways. In each situation someone came to find because they were valued and loved.

Human beings are funny creatures. That is not a dig at God who made us. I suspect God is funny too. We are created for good and out of love and to love. We are made in the perfect image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet we are not perfect in how we act or behave. Our free will works against us most of the time. Through it all God still loves us

fiercely and wants us to be close to Him. To be a Christian means that we struggle. Mostly with ourselves. These struggles are there to keep us humble. Pray that we become aware of them and have the strength to tackle them.

Remember that we are called to be inclusive. To love everyone as Jesus did in His ministry. We are all inclusive because we belong to the Family of God. We are His children. If we remember these things, then hate, racism, greed and war would not exist. Being a Christian does not mean we cannot get lost. It just lessens the chances because of the community of support we have. However if we do get lost God comes a looking for us or sends someone to do it for Him. That is how much God loves and values us. God bless and have a great week, Pastor D