

# TAKEAWAY

## SEARCHLIGHT

### Frequently asked questions

#### IS GOD REALLY INTERESTED IN ME?

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020

#### INTRODUCTION

This Sunday, we rounded off our Searchlight series with each congregation looking at the question, “Is God really interested in me?” We answered this question by delving into Luke 15:1-7, also known as the parable of the lost sheep.

#### DISCUSS

1. Do you ever wonder whether God is interested in you personally? Are there any particular things that cause you to ask this question?

#### READ

Luke 15:1-7

#### EXPLAIN

The opening couple of verses gives us some context – Jesus is speaking to some religious leaders. They don’t understand why Jesus would spend time with some of the least valued people in society. He responds by telling them some stories that are very simple in one way, but actually challenge how everyone sees God and how to respond to Him. The story of the lost sheep is the first story he tells.

It’s also helpful to consider what it means to be “lost.” In this chapter of Luke, Jesus tells three stories, each of which shows us a different type of lostness.

In Luke 15:8-10 we see the story of a lost coin. The coin is lost through no choice of its own – it is shaped and directed by circumstances. Spiritually, we might become lost through what has happened to us through things outside of our control – the choices of our parents, our culture, or the systems of society.

In Luke 15:11-29 we see the story of a lost son. The son is lost through his own bad decisions. Spiritually, we might become lost through poor choices we make – they are our choices and we are aware of them, but we choose badly anyway.

Here in Luke 15:3-7 we see the story of a lost sheep. The sheep is lost because it is unwise – it simply does not know any better and wanders away from safety. Spiritually, we might be lost through our lack of wisdom – we end up distant from God because we don’t know any better.

#### DISCUSS

2. Is this way of seeing lostness new to you? Does anything stand out for you?
3. What are the potential pitfalls of over-emphasizing a single one of these forms of lostness?
4. By definition, sheep-like lostness is very hard to spot in your own life. We are blind to our own blindness! One way to see it, though, is to think



about what you were like in the distant past. Think about what you were like ten years ago, twenty years ago, thirty years ago etc. What makes you cringe? What opinions, actions or words do you regret - that you would not have recognised at the time?

5. It is possible that there are areas of lostness in your life that you are presently blind to, but which you will cringe at one day in the future! What is your instinctive reaction to this thought?

6. God knows all of your lostness - all that has been, and all to come. Re-read verses 5-6. How would you describe the owner of the sheep? Do you think that this could possibly mirror how God sees you personally? Why so?

7. Re-read verse 7. Remember that Jesus is challenging a group of religious leaders who think they know what lostness is - and that they are not lost themselves. Jesus is not communicating to them that some people don't need to repent, but that God takes great delight in welcoming home those who are lost - which all of us are in our own ways at different times. How does Jesus's statement about how God delights in welcoming repentant sinners answer any concern we have that we are not good enough or valuable enough?

## PRAY

God's pursuit of us is relentless and joyful - regardless of the depth of our lostness in all its forms. Spend some time praying in worship and thankfulness to Him.

Who do you know that would particularly benefit from hearing this message right now? Why not pray for them too!

