

**BREAK
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OPEN
THE
WORD**

September 15, 2013
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Lectionary: 132

Gospel Lk 15:1-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. "Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'" So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns, who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

Spiritual Reflection

This story can be found in this book called *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning* By Ernest Kurtz & Katherine Ketcham: "Once upon a time, a carefree young girl who lived at the edge of a forest and who loved to wander in the forest became lost. As it grew dark and the little girl did not return home, her parents became very worried. They began calling for the little girl and searching in the forest, and it grew darker. The parents returned home and found neighbors and people from the town to help them search for their little girl. Meanwhile, the little girl wandered about in the forest and became very worried and anxious as it grew dark, because she could not find her way home. She tried on path and another and became more and more tired. Coming to a clearing in the forest, she lay down by a big rock and fell asleep. Her frantic parents and neighbors scoured the forest. They called and called the little girl's name but to no avail. Many of the searchers became exhausted and left, but the little girl's father continued searching throughout the night. Early in the morning, the father came to the clearing where the girl had lain to sleep. He suddenly saw his little girl and ran toward her, yelling and making a great noise on the dry branches which awoke the girl. The little girl saw her father, and with a great shout of joy she exclaimed, "Daddy, I found you!" - Some times the reason it seems God cannot find us is that we do not stop and let Him find us. Today's Gospel parables are all about us stopping trying to fix our problems and to simply let God find us.

Spiritual Question

1. What problems are you trying to fix right now?
2. When do you normally invite God into your problems?
3. Are you holding any resentment toward God for how He seems to treat others better?
4. How is turning toward sin like rising from the dead?
5. Why do you think the Father comes out to both sons despite the act of going out made him look weak

ST. MATTHEW



ST. MARK



SAINT LUKE



SAINT JOHN



2013