

A MESSAGE ON YOUR GOD-GIVEN WORTH

LOSING A PRECIOUS CHILD

God suffers with lost humanity, but rejoices when the lost come back to Him.

By George Foster



KARE11 NEWS OF MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA,¹ recently carried the following item: On October 22, 1989, a man abducted 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling at gunpoint near his home in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Immediately the parents, Jerry and Patty Wetterling, went on television pleading for people to look for and pray for their son. They also pleaded for the man who took Jacob to bring him home. “Look into your heart, give him back to us,” Jerry said.

Al Garber, supervisor of the FBI's Violent Crimes Squad in Minneapolis at the time, arrived in St. Joseph the morning after Jacob's abduction. He eventually oversaw an investigation that, at its peak, involved 70 investigators and countless volunteers.

Even now, twenty-years later, Pam Jensen of the Stearns County Sheriff's Department says, “I would say that, on average, we get three or four leads a month. Investigators have sifted through 41,000 leads.”

Today, the Wetterlings believe their now 31-year-old son is still alive, waiting to be found, waiting to reunite with his growing family. They know that hope is timeless.

Jerry said, “I've never had a feeling that he's not with us anymore, or that he's not breathing. We want him back. He's part of our family, whatever happened, we can heal and we can mend.” Patty added, “Until I know that it's not a possibility, I'm always going to hold onto the hope that we will someday get a chance to build new memories.”

Our Heavenly Father longs to be reunited with His lost ones.

If you and I were to lose a son or daughter or any other person who is precious to us, we too would do everything in our power to find that person and be reunited. In Luke, chapter 15, Jesus told three stories to illustrate that God suffers because of lost humanity and experiences great joy when the lost come back to Him.

“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? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep! 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.’” (vs. 3-7).

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not 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.’” (Vs. 8-10).

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

"After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'" (Vs. 11-24).

I bring these examples for two reasons:

1. To state in yet another way that you and I are loved and treasured by God. God places immeasurable value on us and paid the supreme price of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to save us. I remind you of the words of Jesus:

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 1:10).

May we be reminded that all people are treasured by God, who always pursues those who are estranged from Him.

2. To remind us that we are called to take up the work that Jesus began and reach out to the lost. As Jesus said to His disciples, he repeats to us:

"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21).

May we always be united with Jesus in seeking to save the lost.

1. http://www.kare11.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=826726&catid=391