



LOST AND FOUND 1: WHO IS JESUS?

Read [Luke 4:14-30](#)

"Boy haven't you grown"

"I remember when you were only *this* big"

"Why didn't you perform any of your party tricks when you were living in Nazareth?"

I wonder if these are the words that Jesus heard when he returned to his old stomping ground. Did he have one of those Aunties that grabs your cheeks in such a patronising way – you know the ones?

In Luke 4:14-30 we see Jesus return to Nazareth, read the Bible, and preach a sermon. The local Nazarenes didn't like what he said. They were amazed and astonished at the way that he taught – but they didn't really take his message to heart. Instead they tried to kill him. But it wasn't yet Jesus' time.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is more than just some country boy who moves to the city and then makes it big. Jesus isn't just a cool guy to have around at parties (although water into wine is very useful!). Almost every religion is willing to accept that Jesus was a great teacher – but he was much more than that!

Jesus is the Spirit-Anointed one who brings Salvation

Jesus identifies himself with the Isaiah 61 passage that he read out in the Synagogue. Jesus is the one Anointed by the Spirit (already made obvious in Luke 3 with Jesus' baptism and Luke 4 with Jesus' temptation in the dessert) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour to the poor, prisoners, blind and the oppressed.

Jesus' mission? To seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). The people in vv18-19 are lost. They are helpless. They are without hope. They are homeless bums, they are destitute, and they are troubled. Jesus came to seek and save people like that. When Jesus meets their physical needs – ultimately it is pointing to their far greater spiritual need.

Jesus is the Spirit-Anointed one who brings Judgement

In Isaiah 61 not only does it say that the Spirit-anointed one will bring salvation – he will also bring judgement. That is clear in this passage. There is judgement upon the people of Nazareth for rejecting their own local boy as there is judgment upon Israel in the time of Elijah and Elisha. Ironically, in taking offence at Jesus' teaching, the Nazarenes try to kill Jesus. This is judgment upon them. Ultimately this near miss points us to the way that Jesus will rescue the lost: his death on the cross.

Are you lost or found?

Jesus brings both salvation and judgment. There are religious nuts that don't recognise their need for Jesus. Jesus will judge those that reject him. Whether you are physically rich or poor – you are spiritually lost – and only in Jesus, the Spirit-Anointed one, can you be found.

Spend time thanking God that Jesus came to bring salvation and judgement.

Write down 3 friends who are lost and need to be found by Jesus. Pray that you would have opportunities to share Jesus with them.



LOST AND FOUND 2: THE FISHERMEN

Read [Luke 5:1-11](#)

I caught a fish once. Once. That's it. I've always lived near water, but never been a fisherman. Some of Jesus' close disciples were fishermen. They caught more fish than me - especially when Jesus gave them a hand! In [Luke 5:1-11](#) Jesus meets some peeps at the end of a long and unsuccessful night of fishing. He tells them to throw their net in one more time. Begrudgingly they do. To their astonishment they get the biggest catch of their lives... even the boat starts to sink!

Simon Peter responds to Jesus with the words: *"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* In the presence of Jesus, Peter recognises that he is nothing. He is sinful. He is lost. Jesus responds: *"Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."* This isn't a reference to them running down Oxford Street looking for men to catch - rather Jesus is calling them to a career change. Still fishing, but not for fish, but people - people who are lost, people that Jesus came to find.

After the greatest catch of their fishing careers - they leave all of it behind to follow Jesus. Are you lost? Are you willing to give up everything to follow Jesus? Only in Jesus can you be found.

ps - we looked after my sister's two fish at the start of the year - one of them died. Sorry Jen. Note to family: don't [entrust](#) us with your pets!

What do you need to give up to follow Jesus? Pray that God would help you.



LOST and FOUND 3: The Paralytic

Read [Luke 5:17-26](#)

Today began like any other day. I woke up to the sound of the chickens. Mum brought me in some breakfast and I lay in bed reading today's Galilee Gazette. I still think it's weird that my sister has been given the job of washing me, but I appreciate it nonetheless.

The boys came around this morning as they often do. They are good friends to me. They spend time with me when others just laugh at me. Often they used to take me out around the town – it was a physical burden to them – but they were creative in how they got me around. Despite my limitations, we got up to some crazy mischief.

That was then. Now that my pain has increased, it's limited the number of outings to zero in the last six months. In fact I haven't even left the house! The pain is bad. But the isolation is worse.

I was shocked today when they suggested that they were taking me out for the day. That teacher from Nazareth has been doing some incredible things. He's my only hope. The boys know this too and said they will do anything to get me an audience with him.

There were more people there than we expected. I said that maybe we should go home and try again another time. However, I was glad when the boys suggested another way.

It was kind of funny how they pulled apart the roof and lowered me down. Suddenly all eyes were on me. I was a little embarrassed. There were so many people there. What would they be thinking? And the religious people? They always seem so serious and frown upon everything.

What came next stunned everyone, especially the religious nuts. The teacher said that my sins were forgiven. This outraged many people. Yet the teacher did more than that. He said to prove that he had authority to forgive sins he would heal my legs. And he did. I'm now walking. I was carried in on my bed but now I am carrying my bed out. I thanked Jesus. And I thanked my friends. That afternoon we had so much fun!

As I lay here falling asleep, I've begun to realise that of the two incredible things that happened to me today, being able to walk again is the least important.

Spend some time praying and thanking God that he has dealt with your greatest need. Thank God that Jesus died in your place and rose again. Pray that people at your school would know their greatest need and how Jesus offers to fix it.



LOST and FOUND 4: The Prostitute

Read Luke 7:36-50

What do Paul Keating, John Howard and the Prostitute from Luke 7:36-50 have in common? They all dealt with Royalty in a way that wasn't considered acceptable by the public. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating touched the Queen (on two occasions!) in a way considered unacceptable. Current Prime Minister John Howard did likewise in greeting the Queen. The prostitute in Luke 7 likewise touched the King of the Universe in a way that onlookers considered unacceptable.

What did Jesus have to say about this? He considered that this sinful woman's response was more appropriate than the Pharisee hosting the party. Simon hadn't recognised just how great his debt was to Jesus. The Prostitute demonstrated in her love for Jesus that she understood how much she had been forgiven. Her love for Jesus didn't earn her forgiveness – but her love demonstrated that she understood the gracious forgiveness offered by Jesus.

Both Simon and the Prostitute were lost. Simon didn't recognise he was lost. The Prostitute did. She came to Jesus knowing that he came to 'seek and save those who were lost.'

Do you recognise you are lost? Has Jesus found you?

How do you treat sinful people (really really bad people) when they come to your youth group or church?



LOST and FOUND 5: The Rebel

Read [Luke 15](#)

The Prodigal Son. He's famous. His story is famous. It's a much loved story of God's amazing love.

The Older Son. He isn't famous. His story isn't well known. Often when we reflect on [Luke 15](#) we stop at verse 24.

We have the story of the Lost Sheep (vv1-7).
We have the story of the Lost Coin (vv8-10).
We have the story of the Lost Son (vv11-24).
We forget the story of the Lost Son II (vv25-32).

It's obvious that the younger son is lost. He tells his dad that he wishes he were dead (v12). He gets his share of the inheritance early and moves to a foreign land and wastes it all in wild living (v13). When tough times hit – the son comes to his senses and returns to his loving Father (v20).

There are two types of people present when Jesus tells these three parables: the tax collectors and sinners (v1) and the Pharisees and teachers of the law (v2). The tax collectors and sinners can clearly identify with the story of the Prodigal son. They, like the Prodigal, have wandered a far way from God and need to come home to him. They are the ones with ears to hear (14:35) who have come to hear (15:1) the offer of forgiveness from Jesus.

The Pharisees are more like the older son. They may not have wandered as far from God, they may not have squandered everything on wild living like the sinners and the first son, but they still need to recognise that without relationship with God they are lost. Their trust is in themselves rather than God. They claim to know God but don't really know him.

What's the point of this parable? There are two lost sons, not one. Both of them need to come home to their father. It seems that the first son does. The older son? Does he? We don't find out. This is good – it leaves hope that even Pharisees (have you heard of Saul of Tarsus???) and religious nuts can come home to God.

Have you come home to God? God offers remarkable love and forgiveness in Jesus. The ultimate demonstration of God's love is Jesus' death for sinners (Romans 5:8). At the cross of Jesus, God is calling both religious nuts and worldly pagans, to come back home.



LOST and FOUND 6: The Pharisee

READ Luke 18:9-14

Country and Western movies are fun. I remember watching them on Saturday afternoons when I was young. I honestly thought that there was a time when everything was black and white. It was while watching these movies that I learnt that the world has always been colourful, it just took a while to work out how to capture it on film!

In Country and Western movies, it's always obvious who the goodies and baddies were. The goodies rode the white horse with the white hat and the white jacket. The baddies? They had the black gear on the black horse. From the beginning until the end it was always obvious who was who.

In Luke 18:9-14 it seems obvious. The Pharisee was a good guy. The Tax Collector was a bad guy. Finished.

Not according to Jesus.

This parable is all about what it means to be justified before God. It's a legal term referring to a right standing and declaration of innocence before a judge. Who is the one who goes home justified before God? It's not the good guy. It's the bad guy who cries out to God for mercy. The good guy was trusting in his own goodness. He had too small a view of God and too high a view of himself. The bad guy recognised he was a bad guy – and knew that the only chance he had of standing before God was based on His mercy. The Tax Collector knew that he was lost. The Pharisee was lost too... but didn't realise it.

Being justified is based on where our confidence is placed. Is it in you or is it in Jesus?

Verse 9 is a key verse to the Parable. Jesus tells this parable to some who were confident in their own righteousness and looked down on others: people just like the Pharisee. The problem for us is that we unknowingly pray a prayer like the Pharisee. We say: "Thank you God that I've responded to you like the Tax Collector. Thank you that I'm not like other people: like Pharisees and other religious nuts." When we pray like that we need to be reminded not to be self-righteous.

Where is your confidence?

How do you treat the 'sinner' that comes into your youth group/church?

How do you treat the self-righteous religious person that comes into your midst?



LOST and FOUND 7: The Rich Man

READ Luke 18:18-34

I grew up in Wyong. I grew up thinking that my family weren't very rich. I grew up disappointed that my parents didn't buy me all of the toys that I 'needed'.

I've now grown up and now realise just how rich I've always been. Having running water, a roof over my head, a steady income and an incredibly prosperous government and welfare system means that I'm one of the richest people in the world!

If you're reading this on the Internet, you're rich too. Truly poor people don't use the internet. Jesus says in [Luke 18:18-34](#) that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God.

Bummer.

It's pretty tough to get into the Kingdom of God!

It's even tougher when you try to do something to get in. The Rich Dude in Luke 18 thought that he could 'do' something to go to heaven: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

He thinks he's done enough. He claims to have kept a bunch of commandments. Yet he's failed to keep the greatest commandment. He doesn't love and worship God with all of his heart. He loves his possessions and riches more than he loves God.

The truth is that all of us fail to love God as we should.

So the disciples rightly ask – who then can be saved?

Jesus: what's impossible with men is possible for God.

It's impossible for anyone – rich or poor – to receive eternal life by doing stuff. Immediately following Jesus' interaction with the Rich Dude Jesus speaks, in Luke 18:31-34, of how the impossible will be achieved. The key? Jesus. Jesus will do it. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. How does he do that? Through his death and resurrection.

Where is your trust? Is it in yourself and what you can DO? Or is it in Jesus and what he has DONE?



LOST and FOUND 8: The TAX COLLECTOR

READ Luke 19:1-10

On every single occasion that I have lodged a tax return over the past 10+ years I have received money back from the government. Except one time.

I was a uni student. That year I had to pay the government extra tax at the end of the year because I hadn't paid enough throughout the prior financial year.

I forgot to pay it.

So.

At the end of the calendar year the tax collector came to visit.

In the old days they would knock on your door, but now they only knock on your door if you owe millions. I didn't owe millions. So they sent me a letter instead.

The letter was very encouraging (like the letter I was sent from a theological college when I failed a correspondence course exam... but that's another story!). Basically they wanted to help me. The letter gave me a whole bunch of options on how they could help me to pay off the loan. Did I need financial assistance? Financial advice? A longer period to pay off the total? They gave me a number of hotlines to ring depending on my scenario. I was really impressed with the letter! How much did I owe? \$5.27... that's all! I didn't need any advice... I just needed a kick up the pants to remind me to pay it! \$5.27. I didn't really need all the options that they offered – but I thought that the tax collector was being nice nonetheless.

Nice.

Nice isn't a word you'd use to describe Tax Collectors in the time of [Luke 19:1-10](#). In first century Israel the tax collectors were Jewish rip-off merchants who were working for the occupying Roman forces. They were hated by their fellow countrymen. For good reason. The tax collectors didn't send 'nice' letters like I received. They sent guys with big muscles to beat you up. And rather than just collecting your \$5.27 they'd squeeze \$527 out of you!

So when the religious nuts have a go at Jesus by saying "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner'"... they were right! Zacchaeus was a bad man. He ripped people off.

Things changed when Zac met Jesus.

Repentance is 'be sorry and change your mind' and 'turn back'. Zac repented. He turned his life around upon following Jesus. He gave half of his possessions away and promised to pay back fourfold to those he'd ripped off.

This is the type of guy that Jesus came to seek and save. He was lost. He may have been wealthy. But he was lost. I wonder if the parable in Luke 18:9-14, where a tax collector cries out to God for mercy, is a preview to the events here in chapter 19?

Jesus doesn't save the lost so that they can continue being lost. When the lost are found they are to live differently.

If you are a Christian, you are no longer lost. But you need to be different. You aren't saved because you are different. You are different because you have been saved.



LOST and FOUND 9: The Criminals

READ Luke 23:32-43

John Lennon said of The Beatles: "We're more popular than Jesus." Noel Gallagher said of Oasis: "We're going to be bigger than the Beatles."

Noel Gallagher in effect is saying that Oasis will be bigger than Jesus!

Lots of people in pop culture have an opinion on who Jesus is... more often than not many quotes about Jesus may seem positive or simply be neutral. Different religions are happy to say that Jesus was a great teacher. But often when Jesus is mentioned in popular culture it is done in a mocking tone. Jesus is ridiculed.

Why do people ridicule Jesus? Why do people reject Jesus?

In [Luke 23:32-43](#) of the many responses to Jesus, they can be summarised into 2 categories.

Those that reject Jesus.
Those that accept Jesus.

The people. Reject Jesus.
The rulers. Reject Jesus.
The soldiers. Reject Jesus.
The sign writer. Rejects Jesus.
The criminal #1. Rejects Jesus.

The criminal #2. **Accepts** Jesus.

Of all the responses that Luke records for us (in this passage) there is only one where Jesus is not rejected.

Criminal #2 has a good set of glasses on. He can see clearly.

1) He sees himself clearly

"We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve." This guy isn't deluded. He's probably spent the last day or two reflecting on his life that is about to end. He's done the crime. Now he's about to pay. He is being honest – he knows he is lost. He's under no illusion.

2) He sees Jesus clearly

"But this man has done nothing wrong... Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." While others throw insults at Jesus this guy is bowing his knee to the Lord of the Universe. He recognises that Jesus is without sin – and he recognises that Jesus is the King of an eternal kingdom.

Criminal #2 knows that he is lost. Criminal #2 knows that Jesus can find him.

What about everyone else? Not just those at the scene but for the last 2000 years of history? Everyone who rejects Jesus has failed to 1) see themselves clearly and 2) see Jesus clearly.

Have you recognised that you are lost?

Have you recognised that it's only in Jesus death that you can be found?



LOST AND FOUND 10: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FOUND

Read Luke 24:36-49

We began in Study one answering the question WHO IS JESUS? Who is he? He's the one who comes to seek and save the lost in fulfillment of Isaiah 61.

In this final passage from Luke we see that Jesus again fulfills an Old Testament Bible passage. Which one? All of them!! The "Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" is just another way of saying the whole of the Old Testament.

2 Corinthians 1:20 says that "no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ."

All of God's promises and purposes are summed up in Jesus.

Life is all about Jesus.

And in [Luke 24:36-49](#) Jesus (who is physically risen and eating) helps the disciples to understand that everything that happened to him was done according to the scriptures. He suffered, he died, he rose again, and now repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name.

Life is all about Jesus.

We were made by Jesus and for Jesus.

We were saved by Jesus and for Jesus.

Being a Christian is all about Jesus. It's not about religion. It's not about doing stuff. It's about Jesus. Trusting Jesus. Believing Jesus. Loving Jesus. Suffering for Jesus. Delighting in Jesus. Proclaiming Jesus. Praying to Jesus. Worshipping Jesus. Living for Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

When the lost are found by Jesus. Life is no longer about living in darkness. Life is about living in the light of Jesus. Living differently because of what Jesus has done.

What will it mean to now live as one who has been found?

What will it mean to be part of the fellowship of the found?

The rest of the New Testament is about what it means to gather as part of the fellowship of Jesus. In Luke's second volume, The ACTS of the Apostles, he gives some insights on what it meant for the early church to live the new life.

Have a read of [Acts 2:42-47](#) & [Acts 4:32-37](#) and see something of the radical changes in the lives of the first followers of Jesus: The Fellowship of the Found.

Are you found?

What's stopping you from coming to Jesus to be found?