

DIVINE EMBRACE

Luke 15:1-32

God refuses to be God without his people living in his embrace.

Human Folly

A sheep wanders away from the fold and gets lost—the case of spiritual drifting.
A coin falls off a woman's necklace and gets lost—the case of spiritual disorientation.
A son rejects his father, leaves home, and gets lost—the case of spiritual defiance.

Undiminished Value

The shepherd still treasures the lost sheep because it belongs to him.
The woman still treasures the lost coin because it belongs to her.
The father still treasures the lost son because he belongs to him.

Costly Pursuit

The shepherd enters into the sheep's lostness in order to find it.
The woman gets dirty looking for the coin in order to restore it.
The father takes his son's shame to himself in order to cover it.

Heaven's Joy

The shepherd finds the lost sheep, puts it around his neck, and calls others to rejoice with him.
The woman finds the lost coin, (presumably) puts it around her neck, and calls others to rejoice with her.
The father finds his lost son, falls on his neck with kisses, and calls others to rejoice with him.

Our Response

Renounce the *drifting* you have done, and accept the *restoration* God has for you in Christ.
Renounce the *dirt* you have been playing in, and accept the *cleansing* God has for you in Christ.
Renounce the *defiance* you have expressed, and accept the *embrace* God has for you in Christ.

Giving Thanks

Come to the Table, and visibly accept your acceptance.
Joyfully make room for others at the Table—those who are likewise loved and graced by God.
Remember that it's not a fattened calf that has been killed for your return, but the Son of God himself.