

Reaching the Lost

God's Priority!

Lost people are God's highest priority. It is God's desire that every person is found and that they have a relationship with Him. Jesus came to earth to save "lost" people (including us) and He wants us to partner with Him in this great purpose.

Lost Sheep and Lost People

1 Peter 2:25 (NIV)

(25) For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

In what way were we lost?

Mark 6:34 (NIV)

(34) When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

How were the people lost?

God's Heart for Lost People

Read Luke 15:1-7, 20-32

Luke 15:1-7 (NIV)

- (1) Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.
- (2) But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."
- (3) Then Jesus told them this parable:
- (4) "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?
- (5) And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders
- (6) and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'
- (7) 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.

Luke 15:20-32 (NIV)

- (20) 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.
- (21) "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'
- (22) "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.
- (23) Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.
- (24) For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.
- (25) "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.
- (26) So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.
- (27) 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'
- (28) "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.
- (29) But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.
- (30) But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'
- (31) "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.
- (32) But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

How does this show that lost people are important to God?

Luke 19:9-10 (NIV)

- (9) Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.
- (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Why did Jesus come to earth?

Luke 5:31-32 (NIV)

- (31) Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.
- (32) I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

What kind of people did Jesus come for?

Our Hearts for Lost People

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)

- (19) Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.
- (20) To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.
- (21) To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.
- (22) To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.
- (23) I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Why did Paul try to relate to others?

Romans 9:1-3 (NIV)

- (1) I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—
- (2) I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.
- (3) For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race,

What was Paul willing to give up so that others would be saved?

Romans 10:14 (NIV)

- (14) How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

What part do we play in reaching the lost?

Ask a Friend

How were you “found”?

What did God do to find you?

How did people help you to become a Christian?

Application

Let's ask God to change our hearts so that we understand His priority for lost people. Let's ask God to help us to think of three people who are lost, so that we can pray for them daily. Your prayers are effective, and God will start to help you in reaching out to your friends.

Make a habit of praying every day for the three people that God has put on your heart.

Do one new thing this week to reach out to lost people.

Prayer Model

Lord Jesus, I thank You that You loved me enough to find me and save me. Lord, please make my priority the same as yours, and please use me in Your plan to reach out to many people.

Key Verse

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)

- “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”