

February 14, 2019

It Happened Again

By Teresa Hampton

Twenty plus years ago I discovered that one of my rings was missing. It was an ordinary piece of jewelry. It was my *grandmother's*. We searched and searched with no avail. Three months later it appeared under the passenger seat of our car, a place we had previously looked *numerous* times.

Well, it happened again a few days ago—my grandmother's ring was missing. For days I retraced my steps, looking in every conceivable place. I went through my purse a third time, taking out everything, piece by piece, and feeling down into every one of the gazillion pockets. Lo and behold, it was there in the bottom of the last tiny pocket!

The search for my ring was an urgent, passionate endeavor, to say the least. However, it pales in comparison to God's love for lost souls and the lengths He would go to search for them.

When the Jews complained to Jesus that he received and ate with sinners, He responded to their criticism with three parables (Luke 15:1-7).

First, Jesus told of a shepherd who lost one sheep. He left the ninety-nine and went to seek the lost. He found the sheep and called his friends, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost! I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."

Second, our Lord described a woman who lost one of her ten silver coins (Luke 15:8-10). She lit a lamp, swept, and searched carefully until she found it. She called her friends and neighbors and said, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" The Savior said, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Christ's third parable was about the younger son of a man who asked for his portion of the inheritance (Luke 15:11-32). He journeyed to a far country and wasted all of it with prodigal living. A famine forced him to work for a man who raised swine. He was so hungry he would have gladly eaten the pig's slop, but no one gave him anything. He decided to go home and ask his father to receive him back as a hired servant.

"And when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." The young man recited what he had

planned to say, but the father would have none of it. He asked the servants to put out the best robe, a ring for his hand, sandals for his feet and put them on him. He then killed a fatted calf and prepared a great feast of joy.

God's love for lost souls compelled Him to send His precious, only-one-of-a-kind Son to die an agonizing death on the cross to save a perishing world. I'm questioning now how much I care about souls dying in sin. Do I seek opportunities to share the gospel with them? Do I consider them more valuable than a physical ring like a ring? Do you?

Today's Verses: *'For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will **search** for the sheep and seek them out (Ezekiel 34:11), and For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Matthew 18:11).*

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