

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 19)
 Year of the Lord 2019
 Luke 15

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
 “Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
 Thee!”**

Luke 15:1–10 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

In the Name of Jesus:

‘Before the angels of God’—where is THAT?! THAT, dearly beloved, IS...GOD! THEY are BEFORE Him, those angels!

And we too! The Good News declares that WE TOO are THERE—RAISED...THERE...when these two go together: repentance, utter turning, complete RE-ORIENTATION; and the word ‘sinner.’

Listen to me, your heaven-sent shepherd. Ignore what every other voice is lying to you about what you are and what you—ugh!—

what you DO!

The MULTITUDE of the heavenly host appeared and sang the chorus to the hymn of heaven—FEAR NOT! Great song!—when the day came for Mary to deliver firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in diapers and such; and she laid Him in an animal food trough, because there were too many people in the house and the big beds were all filled. (Little tyke'll be just fine there.)

That night: who was sinner? And WHO was repenting? The angels brought their presence from heaven to EARTH—and that's where things started getting all jumbled up and mixed together and pumped to bursting with joy! With Christ born—just now where IS heaven, God, the presence of the angels?

You want REPENTANCE, dear Christian? You go it! From HIS lips, the wellspring of Joy! Mother Mary taught Him to speak. 'Say mumma! Say dada!' And, most important, 'Say GRAMPA!'

Sheep are good at getting lost. In fact, that's their JOB!

When the shepherd forsakes sheep who do NOT know their job—to get LOST!—and when that shepherd finds the only one fulfilling his contract, getting LOST; and SLINGS it over his shoulders, to make sure it comes along:

Joy! Heaven! God! Creation is made anew what it was always meant to be!

Here's where pastor gets into trouble. Meaning, I read the sign out front on the way into church today. It says we're Lutherans here. If WE don't play the part, who will?

Just what part of turning over the whole thing, reorienting everything, did the sheep perform?

I just felt it! Maybe therapy is working. I just go a thrill of joy!

And if the sheep—whose role it is in this world is to get LOST—is FOUND...

AND....

THAT...

IS...

SINNER...

ANNNDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD...

THAT...

IS...

REPENTANCE...

If men on earth who have now God's good will—for we have HIM, in the FLESH, ruling us...AS...A...BABYYYYYY....

All men need to do now is to FIRE just about every man and woman who makes a living flapping their gums about what YOU need to do to get right with God again; getcherself t' hebben;

When you hear that pablum, dear sheep, speak as our current president used to say in a previous TV role: YER FIRED! YOUR ears were not created by the Holy Spirit to receive trash-talk!

And when your conscience bothers you—it MAY...for the Law still threatens to kill us and the Law ain't kidding...

AND...how much more ashamed can we be than to play this game:

‘Me ‘n Jesus think YOU oughta be more THIS. Me ‘n Jesus are here to tell you you need to be less of THAT...’

My dear ones, The Gospel according to Saint Luke was written for one primary purpose: to FREE us from the delusion that ANYONE is teamed with our Savior, Christ, the Lord, born of Mary. There was room for exactly ONE on His cross; as there was room for just Him in the manger.

The only ‘Me ‘n Jesus’ going on is the ‘ME’ getting lost, and the role of shepherd and seeking and saving being played by the Joy of Heaven.

He does all He can to preach THAT! Praying for His executioners, and placing THEM in the Kingdom of Heaven WAY AHEAD of those who boasted ‘It’s YOU ‘N ME, BUDDY; JESUS; right?’

Before That Day, He ate and drank with sinners and tax collectors. And He told the story of the lost sheep being found. And, then, He took every last burden off of us:

‘BETTER example’—sez Jesus—is a coin lost in the dirt. Dirt swept; coin found; owner rejoices; and no folk should be sad!

What do you think of, when you think of the word SINNER, my dear ones? The flapping gums have poisoned us into thinking about sinners as chemists in the lab with horrible reagents, mixing and concocting for some nefarious end....

Wow is that wrong! A sinner is nothing LESS...THAN...

A coin lost in the dust.

And the Savior of said sinner is nothing LESS...THAN...

A lovely woman flying 'round the house on her broomstick, raising a cloud of dust, until said coin is found.

LONG before we need pray the Savior to SAVE us, my dear ones; we rightly pray the Spirit of Jesus, the Promise of the Father, to show us WHERE...WE...ARE...ALREADY—in the dust—NOT how POTENTIALLY in danger we may one day become.

That's what HE was baptized for; and then, we too!

HE does all the finding;

WE do all the 'being found';

And, then, we eat and drink with—whoever we FIND OURSELVES with!

And if there are those who insist on DEMOTING themselves from the lofty position of lost sheep; Jesus turns all hearts from the ninety-nine who do NOT need Him, to just the one; the one who is lost.

And if the whole religious world insists of DEMOTING itself form

the Heavenly Position of coin lost among the Cheeto crumbs under the couch—

Oooh, my lovelies—let's not fall for it at this late hour! The only 'ME 'N JESUS' the coin has going on, is that said coin is now in His hand!

Let the Savior be the Savior; let us not DEMOTE ourselves from being the SAVED, the FOUND.

REPENT, coins, sheep! Of ANY 'Here's what ME 'N JESUS have to say about YOU!'

You wanna send a thrill up Heaven's Leg? You wanna make the angels smile? You wanna join Jesus eating and drinking with dirty tax schemers and sinners? Eat and drink His Body and His Blood, in with and under the Bread and the Wine, for the forgiveness of all sins. That'll make the angels smile, when they see the face of God beaming! The other animals who dine with you on the Baby from the manger are just as lost; AND, just as found as you and me in the Name of Jesus. Amen.