

Interactive lesson



picture cropped from
<https://api.time.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/9-11-moved-them-most-01.jpg>

What happened 21 years ago today? <Let them respond>

Why did it happen? <Let them respond>

Do you think there was any justification for the attacks? <Let them respond>

The hijackers were acting in retaliation for US support of Israel, US involvement in the Persian Gulf War, and continued US military presence (interference) in the Middle East. What did we do in response to the 9-11 attacks? <Let them respond>

The US began a war on terror, starting in Afghanistan and later spectacularly bombing Iraq. Less than 3000 people (including the terrorists) were killed in the 9-11 attacks. Possibly that many again died of illnesses related to exposure from the attacks. Do you know how many were killed in the war in Afghanistan? <Let them respond>

According to Wikipedia, civilian casualty reports for the Afghan war range from about 46,000 to 170,000. Do you know how many were killed in the bombing of Iraq? <Let them respond>

According to Wikipedia, Iraq War casualties are hotly debated, with claims ranging from 151,000 to over a million. How do those numbers compare with 3000 to

6000? <Let them respond; can we say “overkill”?>

What do you think God would say about that?

<Let them respond>

God wants better for us. Jesus taught us to do better. The Holy Spirit will guide us to better if we open our hearts and minds to the direction of the Lord. In remembrance of 9-11, let us now pray for the world.

Almighty God, we come before you remembering tragedy.

† We remember the innocent and unsuspecting civilians killed, and their still-grieving families.

Comfort and renew those families with your grace.

Let them feel [you walking with them] and remember their lost ones with love.

† We remember the first responders: firemen, police, ambulance personnel, and all others who sought to help, only to have their lives cut short because of their caring hearts.

We give you thanks for their bravery and commitment.

Restore care for communities in the hearts of this generation, that your love may touch all people.

† We remember those driven to acts of terror out of desperation.

Our hearts cry out for all who suffer through insufferable situations.

Grant us your wisdom to see growing problems and to

address them peacefully, before they become desperate, that all may know life without terror and war.

Lord, in remembering tragedy, we ask your help with our divided country and broken world.

† Guide our leaders internationally, nationally, statewide, and locally, and guide each of us individually, to put your grace and the needs of people ahead of the wants of selfishness and greed.

† Teach us peace instead of violence, how to restore instead of destroy, and how to truly love one another as you love us.

All of these things we lift up in your holy name.
Amen.

Gospel lesson

We continue reading about Jesus's countryside ministry in the Gospel of Luke.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lost-sheep/>

Luke 15:1-10

(NRSV)

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.

² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats

with them."

³ So he told them this parable:

⁴ "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.

⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

⁷ 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.

⁸ "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?

⁹ 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.'

¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"

UMH #381>

Message: Finding the Lost



Foreground picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/having-words-with-jesus/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Good Shepherd who takes such wonderful care of us, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may show similar grace to the world. Amen.

In our series this month, "Having Words with Jesus,"



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/having-words-with-jesus/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

we look today at "Finding the Lost":

"Worship is not only about receiving marching orders or getting our weekly assignments.

But it can be a reminder that we are a people with a mission and that we cannot be content with the status quo."

I had a wonderful week camping in the Adirondacks.



picture from MMMS collection

Keven and I went canoeing, geocaching, and hiking all over. On one day, we decided to take a hike three miles through the woods following a waterway from Fish Creek to a bridge just before Floodwood Pond, have a picnic lunch there, and then hike the three miles back on the path on the other side of the waterway.

The weather was gorgeous and we were pretty warm when we got to the bridge, so we took off things we had been carrying - including the contents of our pockets. After we were done eating, we picked up everything and looked around to make sure we had not missed anything, then headed back to the trailhead where we had parked.

You know, when you get back to your vehicle and cannot find the keys in your pocket, it can be problematic. On a hike like we had taken,

- + you might begin a frantic retracing of steps back to the bridge, searching the beautiful scenery along the way as a million possible places that keys could be hiding, praying that you would find them.
- + You might be asking all the other hikers you pass if they had seen your keys, and be disappointed

when no one had – even though they said they would keep an eye out for them on the trail.

† You might get frustrated with the situation, hot and tired from the extra effort.

When you got to your picnic spot and found the keys where they had fallen out of your pocket after your last check that you had everything, you just might feel an overwhelming feeling of relief and gratitude. You just might immediately put them in your pocket and head back, letting folks you had previously passed know: that you had found your keys, that the world was wonderful again.

Could I live without my keys? Probably, as we have duplicates of all of them. But I really do not want to. Now consider that if I was willing to hike an extra six miles just for keys that are replaceable, how much further would I go for one of my children? How far do you think God would go to recover us?



picture cropped from <https://www.wikiart.org/en/michelangelo/the-prophet-jeremiah-1512>

In the Old Testament reading, God was frustrated with the Israelites. They had been created good, and God had made and re-established covenants with them, that they would honor God and not live in sin. Yet despite all God had done, the people did evil instead of

good. The psalmist expressed frustration at others' evil, looking for deliverance for Israel. How frustrated do you think God was with the covenant people for their evil deeds? So, like a certain hiker retracing their steps, God had to rectify the situation.

Jeremiah warned that a desolation was coming, but that not quite all would be lost. Although the people would be punished, God would remain faithful to the covenant. For whatever reason, God loves humanity; God loves us.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lost-sheep/>

In the gospel reading from Luke, the Pharisees seemed to think of it in terms of favoritism, that those who followed the covenant guidelines earned love and attention from God, while those [who did not have the circumstances or means to do as the Pharisees did] were not worth holy people's time. Jesus explained in contrast how God views each one of us as precious, worth going to extra effort to recover.

How about us? Where do we fall in this story? What role do you play? Do you see yourself as righteous, and judge someone else – anyone else – less deserving of what they have than you are of what you have? Are

you someone lost in sin, struggling to do better yet repeatedly falling short?

Most of us are probably both. Paul testifies as one whom Jesus transformed: Saul was self-righteous and judgmental, able to boast about his piety as a Jew among Jews. Yet he was also lost in sin, trying to do what he thought God wanted, but completely misdirected to the point of harming others, severely persecuting the early church.

If you find yourself thinking that intentionally hurting someone else is “fair” or a way to set things right, think again. God loves all of us, even unfaithful sinners. Jesus calls us to love one another, not to judge or condemn others. When we show love even to those whom we deem in the wrong, the Holy Spirit works through us for the recovery of those who are lost. And as we help one another with the love of God, we build Christian community.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/having-words-with-jesus/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fourteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

So this week, I want you to look for times where you find yourself judging others as less than you think they should be. Rethink how Christ would respond to them – like that now cliché “What would Jesus do?” What would Jesus say to them? Or to you about them?

Carl spoke last week about the cost of discipleship. Sometimes it will be really hard! You may need to hike twice as far as you planned, or to swallow self-righteous pride, or to do other challenging things.

But live as Christ taught. Build up others rather than tearing them down. In doing so, strengthen our community, and give thanks and praise to God, that we all may live in true Christian community: where all people matter, and where there is abundant joy at the restoration and healing of lives and relationships.

Now let us respond with

A Statement of Faith of the Korean Methodist Church

UMH #884

We believe in the one God,
creator and sustainer of all things,
Father of all nations,
the source of all goodness and beauty,
all truth and love.

We believe in Jesus Christ,
God manifest in the flesh,
our teacher, example, and Redeemer,
the Savior of the world.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
God present with us for guidance, for comfort,
and for strength.

We believe in the forgiveness of sins,
in the life of love and prayer,
and in grace equal to every need.

We believe in the Word of God
contained in the Old and New Testaments
as the sufficient rule both of faith and of
practice.

We believe in the Church,
those who are united in the living Lord
for the purpose of worship and service.

We believe in the reign of God
as the divine will realized in human society,
and in the family of God,
where we are all brothers and sisters.

We believe in the final triumph of righteousness,
and in the life everlasting. Amen.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

God of relentless love, the Gospel reminds us of the
joy you feel when one of your children chooses the
path of repentance and redemption.

We picture the celebration in your heart when that
choice is made.

We also know how prone we are to wander off that path
as we pursue those things that satisfy ourselves
only.

Receive the gifts we offer this day as a sign of our

striving to get back on the path that leads us to you.

(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.
- Lord, please help people who yet struggle with war in their homeland.
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers
- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
 - **Carl Cole** – covid positive
 - **Royal family of England** – Queen Elizabeth died Sep 8
 - **Dawn White** – lost two goats this week
 - **Family of Dave Miller** – died Sep 4
 - **Family of Lucy McKee** – died Sep 6
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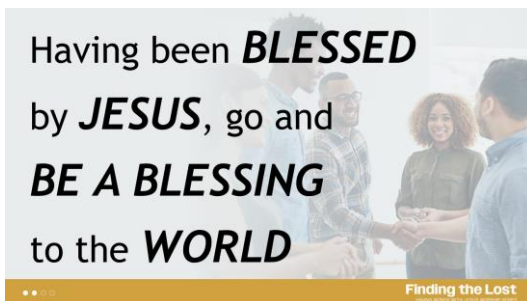
- Thanks for

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All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Amazing Grace" UMH #378>

<Benediction>



background picture from
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Remembering the Amazing Grace
with which God seeks the lost, and
Having been blessed by Jesus,
Go with that Amazing Grace of the Holy Spirit
and be a blessing to the World.
Amen.