

small group **discussion**

Found

For the sermon on October 25-26, 2014

“Going Home”

Get Acquainted

Tell a story of when you were physically lost. How did you find your way again?

Get Started

What resonated with you most as you listened to this week’s sermon? What was the single most compelling or impactful thing you heard?

Background to the Story | Luke 4.16-31

As Jesus’ reputation and popularity grew, he returned to Nazareth, the village where he grew up. The people of his hometown anticipated great things from their native son. As Jesus taught in the synagogue, where he most likely attended hundreds of times while growing up, his words turned the town against him. The people became enraged with him and attempted to throw him off a cliff—a pretty extreme response to a sermon.

The people of Nazareth, like much of Israel, anticipated a Messiah who would deliver them from the Romans. To them, “salvation” meant rescue from the oppressors, who would include Roman tax collectors, Roman soldiers, and exploitation from outsiders. But Jesus had a different perspective of how they needed to be rescued. As we examine this story together, ask this question about yourself: *what if the Jesus who is seeking me is different from the Jesus I am seeking?*

Listen to the Story | Luke 4.16-31

- Option 1: The small group leader tells the story accurately and passionately from memory. The group listens with Bibles closed.
- Option 2: Someone from the group reads the story while the group listens with Bibles closed.

Tell the Story | Luke 4.16-31

- Option 1: Everyone gets a partner and retells the story to their partner from memory.
- Option 2: One or two people volunteer to retell the story to the group from memory.

Read the Story | Luke 4.16-31

Read the story with everyone following along in their copy of the text. Feel free to use another Bible version if you have read it before.

Explore the Story

What do you see? What does this mean?

1. Who are the characters and what roles are being played in the story? What did they say and do?
2. Describe the tension in the story.
3. What choices are being made? What choices *could* be made? What are the outcomes of the choices?
4. What did you find compelling in this story?
5. What questions do you have? (Something you don’t understand or need more information about.)

How does this story connect with *your* story?

Lost

As we begin this series, it's important to understand the theme that will anchor our discussion during this time.

Jesus came to find people who are lost. The word "lost" doesn't always mean "unbeliever." Christians get lost all the time. We get lost in legalism, or lost in secret patterns of sin, or lost in condescending bitterness. This series is as much for someone who invited Christ into their life 30 years ago, as someone needing to invite Christ in for the first time.

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19.10). As a group, commit this verse to memory. Quote it each week you meet together. Start now! Read the verse together three to five times aloud. Then go around the room and have each person recite it from memory. Repetition is the key to memorization.

Hiding

Coming to God requires that we allow ourselves to be found. Read Genesis 3 together. This is the very first "lost and found" story in Scripture. It's foundational. God promises to seek and save the lost, but often we sabotage God's efforts.

Discuss the concept of allowing ourselves to be found. What can a lost person do to help or to harm those who are looking for her? Think of a child who gets lost in a forest. What about a spiritually lost person? How do pride, fear, and unbelief contribute to our ability to remain in hiding?

This week's One Big Question is . . . Has there been a time in your life when you allowed yourself to be "found" by God? Talk about how God found you.

The Barrier

In our story this week, Jesus declares his divine identity to his home town of Nazareth. In their violent rejection of him, they demonstrate their "lost-ness." There was a barrier between the people and Jesus. They were expecting a different type of rescue. What were they hoping for from the Messiah? What would Jesus offer?

Like the residents of Nazareth, we have well-formed opinions about what God is supposed to do for us. Often, his interests are far different from ours. Respond to these statements:

The wonder is not that we can invite God into our lives but that *he* invites us into *his*.
We don't follow Jesus to get where we're going. We follow Jesus to get where *he's* going.

Mercy

We often have a problem with mercy. In the Nazareth synagogue, rage erupted when Jesus hinted that mercy will be granted to the oppressors (the Romans) as well as the oppressed. We are often more eager to see God's mercy extended to those who are "deserving," than to those who are undeserving. Do you see the paradox here? As you reflect on our world, where would you honestly struggle if God were to extend his mercy? What is our true problem with God's allocation of mercy?

The Invitation

Jesus continually extends an invitation to the "lost" of all types. Read 2 Corinthians 6.1-2 together. What are your hopes for this series? What intrigues you most about the subjects of "lost" and "found"?



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