Sermon**:** The Lost Sheep. ***9/ 11/ 2022***

Jeremiah 4: 11-12 22-28 Joshua 5: 9—12; Luke 15: 1—7

The reading of Luke combined three different stories that described the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. As you know, Jesus welcomed all people without judging or asking their opinion. Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but everyone may be saved through him. John 3: 16-17. However, the tax collectors, sinners, and those who wanted to hear Jesus’ teaching came around him while he was walking. The Pharisees and the scribes grumbled because Jesus was sitting with the sinners. In these stories, Jesus chooses to convey the character of God, who sent him as the only beloved Son into the world so that we may be saved through him.

Because the Pharisees and scribes were crumbling, Jesus told them about the lost things. About the shepherd who left behind an entire flock to seek out one that was lost. About a woman who burns as much oil as a single coin was worth to find it, and the prodigal son who came back to his father, he welcomed him and forgave him. God’s choice is that all of us know him and follow him. God doesn’t want to lose anyone of us. Jesus came into the world to reconcile us with God through his blood. “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shielding of blood, there is no forgiveness.” Heb 9: 22-28.

Our world is so full of division, animosity, and hatred. We are so quick to share misinformation and criticize. And I think in many ways, these parables remind us that when we diminish the worth of another person and hold them at a distance… when we believe that others are unworthy, unfaithful, or uninterested… when we act in hatred or anger towards our siblings… when we are unwilling to sit down together and share a meal… well, then our human family is uncompleted. And part of our role as believers of Jesus Christ is to refrain from grumbling instead of doing our part of seeking the lost sheep of our savior Jesus Christ.

God wants us to be in the church to praise him, and whenever we gather together to worship him, the blessing comes down. Psalm 133: 1-3. Listen to what the Bible says about those who come to worship, even if they are sinners. "Therefore, we know no one after the flesh from now on. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him no more. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:16-19.

All of us were lost and sold by the culture and tradition of our ancestors. Even the world was sold through the transgression of Adam and Eve. The Bible said, "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. Romans 7: 14. Because of his mercy and love, he searched and found us. Psalms 139: 1-7. He gives us a place in the house to stay. We are the heir of God’s promise.

I encourage you in the event we will do in UMC Lake Park on 9/2022 and UMC Harris on 10/ 02/ 2022. Please bring someone with you to hear my testimony. As a church, we have a noble mission to seek the lost sheep of God and bring them into the pasture. Matthew 28: 19 everyone needs to invite people to God. Amen.

Rev. Sedar Shako