



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

August 10, 2021

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

(Isaiah 43:1)

Did You Know?

- Many scholars agree that the author of **Luke** and Acts was Paul's “dear friend Luke, the doctor” (Col 4:14) (The NIV Study Bible)
- This Gospel is dated between the 60s and 80s AD. It is specifically directed to *Theophilus* (1:3) whose name means “*one who loves God*”, and almost certainly refers to a particular person rather than to lovers of God in general. (The NIV Study Bible)
- Theologians think that Mark is the earliest gospel, used by both Matthew and Luke. However, both of them had their own resources not found in any other gospels. The reason of Luke's book is more than a political defence of the Christian Way – making sure that Theophilus understands that neither Jesus, nor Paul were criminals, despite of the method of their execution. Luke's thesis is that Christianity is the legitimate, proper way to practice the Judaism, which was officially allowed in the Roman Empire. (Knowing Christianity by A.R.C. Leaney; pg. 19; 48)
- Luke and Acts address several basic, intertwined issues, like: “Who is Jesus Christ and what does he offer and require?” “What are God's purposes through Christ and the church, and in history? In particular, what is the reign (kingdom) of God? How will it be manifest? When? How can the community join it?” (Chalice Introduction to the New Testament; pg. 177)

Personal Insight

The story below can resonate in those of us who have memories of loosing things, and frantically looking for them. I have to admit that I belong to this group, and one of my ‘soft spots’ are the tiny memory sticks, which may contain important information, but they are so easy to be misplaced!

And if we know the pain and desperation due to disconnection from precious ‘things’, how much more the Holy One yearns to restore the relationship with us, - the unique and valuable members of humanity- who were “created in his image”? The Bible tells us that the Almighty was ready to go as far as to born in human form at the first Christmas. As one of my favorite passages tells us: “... **God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.**” (John 3:16) This has been the supreme act of love and redemption to welcome us back into God's fold. This is how priceless we are in the eyes of God! So, let us hear the encouragement: “**Do not fear...**”.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Priceless Lives in Christ

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Luke 15:10

READ Luke 15:8–10

Tears streamed down my cheeks during a frantic search for my lost wedding and anniversary rings. After an hour of lifting couch cushions and scouring every nook and cranny of our home, Alan said, “I’m sorry. We’ll replace them.”

“Thanks,” I responded. “But their sentimental value surpasses their material worth. They’re irreplaceable.” Praying, I continued hunting for the jewelry. “Please, God. Help me find them.”

Later, while reaching into the pocket of a sweater worn earlier in the week, I found the priceless jewels. “Thank You, Jesus!” I exclaimed. As my husband and I rejoiced, I slipped on the rings and recalled the parable of the woman who lost a coin (Luke 15:8–10). Like the woman who searched for her lost silver coin, I knew the worth of what had been lost. Neither of us was wrong for wanting to find our valuables. Jesus simply used that story to emphasize His desire to save every person He created. One sinner repenting results in a celebration in heaven.

What a gift it would be to become a person who prays as passionately for others as we pray for lost treasures to be found. What a privilege it is to celebrate when someone repents and surrenders their lives to Christ. If we’ve placed our trust in Jesus, we can be thankful we’ve experienced the joy of being loved by Someone who never gave up because He thought we were worth finding. – By **Xochitl Dixon**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father, thank You for reminding me that every person You create is a priceless life worth saving. Amen.

Whose salvation will you commit to praying for today? Who can you share your testimony with?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Jesus’ involvement with the outcasts of society offended the self-righteous Pharisees and the teachers of the law (Matthew 9:10; Luke 7:34; 15:1–2) who saw themselves as the only people deserving of heaven. In response, Jesus taught the three parables found in Luke 15: the lost sheep (vv. 3–7), the lost coin (vv. 8–10), and the lost son (vv. 11–32). All three stories follow a pattern—something is lost, a relentless search is undertaken, and there’s great rejoicing when the lost is found. These paint an unmistakable picture of the persistent and seeking God who relentlessly searches for us until we’re found. In the parable of the lost coin, “ten silver coins” (v. 8) was equivalent to only ten days’ wages for a common laborer, but would constitute a significant portion of the woman’s livelihood, especially if she were poor or a widow. Some scholars suggest the coins were precious because they were part of a dowry, a headband of ten silver coins that signified marital status. – By **K. T. Sim**

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