

# “Everything Lost, Resurrected”

Ephesians 1:2-21 & Luke 19:10

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Since 1991, I have used a Franklin Convey Daily planner. I use it almost everyday. It has my calendar for the next two years, to-do lists, phone numbers, and addresses. In September of 2000, a friend met us at a Chicago hotel to take us to meeting. I was lugging Spencer's car seat and my planner. I set my planner on the roof of the van, so I could get the car seat buckled. At our destination, I went to grab my planner. It was gone. I looked throughout the van and began to panic for it had all the information I needed for the meeting. Even worse, I knew it was packed full of information that would be painstaking to reassimilate and some would be lost forever. Leslie joined the search. We went to the meeting and then spent the rest of the evening frantically looking for the planner everywhere but to no avail. It was lost. Thankfully when we returned home, we had a voice mail. A man saw the planner alongside the interstate, picked it up, and mailed it to me. What is the most valuable thing you have lost and later found?

Parables give us a window into our glorious future. Jesus grieves with us when we lose anything. Jesus told parables to fill us with hope, to ensure us that God never loses anyone or anything. In each of the parables the thing, relationship, or person is found by the power of God's love. The fifteenth chapter of Luke has the parable of the found coin, found sheep, and found sons.

All that is lost you will find. Everything, relationships, aspects of yourself, and people you have lost is already found and resurrected by God. Our joy will abound as we cherish all that is restored. Some we find on earth. Many will be found in heaven.

In the grand scheme of life some of our losses are trivial, like my planner, others are enormous. Jesus assures us that no matter the loss from a mere coin to a child, from a farm animal to a pet, all will be found. Since it is challenging for us to imagine some of our losses being found, Jesus uses parables. My delight in finding my planner gives me a hint of what it will be like to rejoice with my Mom in heaven.

Every loss will be found from the trivial to the enormous. Lost things, lost employment, lost health, lost dreams, lost love, lost opportunities, all will be found. Some of the losses require the grace of the two-edged sword we explored last week. God uses the sword with precision, like a surgeon, to remove hurt, tears, guilt, and shame finding your shalom. Lost innocence by something someone did to you. God's grace removes the pain and finds your innocence. Lost relationship by words and or actions. God's grace removes the damage and finds a harmonies relationship. Lost wholeness by depression, anxiety, worry. God's grace removes the negative thoughts and finds the joy. Lost purity by fear, anger, hate, and sin. God's grace cuts away every mistake and finds our purity. Lost wholeness God finds our completeness. We are unaware of some of our losses, because we never experienced the found aspect, perhaps loving nurturing parents, robust health, enriching friendships, or something else. You will find all. Each of us has lost the wonderful glory of our true self. God will help us find the magnificent saint in each of us.

Losses are enormously painful. Even a mere trivial loss may flood our life with grief for it opens the flood gate of every loss we have ever experienced. Jesus' parables encourage us to keep living, keep looking, keep searching, keep going for all will be found. Jesus grieves with us.

In the parable of the found sons. The Father is consumed with grief. Unable to sleep, he is constantly scanning the horizon for his lost son. In hope he has everything prepared for his son's return; clothes, gifts, a feast. The Father struggles to let go of all the "what ifs" as he runs preparing every path that could lead his son home. In the parable, the son and father are reunited and there is great celebration. And the parable acknowledges that on earth sometimes the loss lingers, festering pain. The older brother is angry. The parable, like many of our losses on earth is not finished. We are left grieving with the brothers over their lost relationship. Ultimately, maybe not until heaven, God will enable each of them to find their love and delight in each other.

Often our most devastating loss is the temporary loss of people we love who are awaiting us in heaven. After C.S. Lewis lost his wife, Joy, due to terminal bone cancer he wrote, "I see people, as they approach me, trying to make up their minds whether they'll say something about it or not. I hate it if they do and if they don't. The act of living is different all through. Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything. I see the rowan berries reddening and don't know for a moment why they, of all things, should be depressing. I hear a clock strike and some quality it always had before has gone out of the sound. What's wrong with the world to make it so flat, shabby, worn-out looking? Then I remember."

Gracie Allen left a message in her papers to be discovered by her husband after her death. Her message, “Never put a period where God has placed a comma.” God never loses anything, never loses any good aspect of our self, and God certainly never loses a person. Each of us is God’s treasured child, a saint in God’s eyes. God will reunite us all in eternal glory. Hardship, shame, guilt, sin, sickness, grief often diminishes our perception of God’s love for us. God always love us. God always knows exactly where we are, what we are thinking and how we are feeling. God is always embracing us with love. Strife, atrocities, and horrendous behavior diminishes our perception of the love that unites us with all people. God will bring us all together in harmonious love.

Luke states, **Luke 19:10 “Jesus came to seek out and to save the lost.”** Jesus died, comma, rose from the dead, comma, and brings everyone home to heaven. God created us to be in a loving relationship with God and with one another. The loss of someone we love is agonizing. Those are the seasons in the valley of the shadow of death; yet even though we may feel alone, God is always with us. “For thou art with me.” In time, God will restore our soul, and we will enjoy green pastures and still waters. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Not maybe, possibly or probably, rather surely; absolutely, unquestionably, definitely, certainly. Surely you will dwell in the house of the Lord, with those you love forever.

Thirteen days ago, Pastor Eugene Peterson journeyed into Life Triumphant, home to heaven. He wrote, “In Ephesians Paul ranges widely, from heaven to earth and back again, showing how Jesus is eternally and tirelessly bringing everything and everyone together. God’s energy of reconciliation is the dynamo at the heart of the universe.” The Apostle Paul wrote, **Ephesians 1: Select Phrases, Various Translations “What pleasure God takes in adopting us, celebrating us, lavishly giving us gifts, including freedom. God is setting us free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. In God we are not just free, rather abundantly free. At the right time God will bring everything together—everything in deepest heaven and everything on planet earth. I pray for you to grasp the immensity of our glorious future, the utter extravagance, endless energy, boundless strength. I pray for your heart to be enlightened with confident hope to glimpse our glorious inheritance, to feel God’s power that resurrected Christ and is resurrecting all.”**

Try to let go, so you can let hope come, a confident expectancy in the promises of God. All will be found. All will be resurrected. All will become whole, perfect, glorious. All will be united in love. You will rejoice, for you will find all. You will rejoice, for you will savor every joy, delight, and love you ever experienced for eternity. You will rejoice, for you will see the radiance of your true self. You will rejoice, for you will be united with every person you said good-bye to in heaven forever. God wove resurrection throughout the cosmos, all will be found.

Pastor Barbara Brown Taylor once preached, “On All Saints’ Day, we make the very bold claim that all people are our relatives. We have the same blood running in our veins—Christ’s blood—and the same light we see shining in them shines in us too. Being a saint means first and foremost belonging to God. Remember that you do not have to be famous, perfect, or dead. You just have to be you—the one of a kind, never to be repeated human being whom God created you to be—to love as you are loved, to throw your arms around the world, to shine like the sun. You do not have to do it alone, either. You have all this company—all these saints sitting right here whom you can see for yourself plus those you cannot, all of them egging you on, calling your name shouting themselves hoarse with encouragement. Because you are part of them and they are part of you and all of us are knit together in the communion of the saints.” Happy All Saints Day. Amen