

“*Get Found*” - New Year’s Telecast **Transcript**

presented by Dr. Ramesh Richard, PhD, ThD

www.rameshrichard.com

I would like to begin with some signs of lostness. I am going to give you three signs of lostness of about ten. The first sign of lostness may be described as restlessness. Restlessness, because you bring in baggage from the past. And everybody here has brought in baggage from the past. You are a part of the past. Hopefully you will not be a prisoner of it. There is a restlessness in your soul, as you try to understand who you are. That’s why the great “Aha” moments; the self-discovery moments are when you understand a part of who you are. There is restlessness, about everything you pursue, and everything you have been.

Some of you know of Edgar Alan Poe, world famous book called *Tell-Tale Heart*, about a young man who kills an older man in his home, and buries him under the floor. Very soon he hears the faint thumping sound of a heart going bump-bump-bump-bump. He suddenly realizes that perhaps the man he killed was not dead yet. Almost immediately he hears knocks on his door. As he opens the door, he finds two policemen. Knowing that the policemen have come to arrest him for this ghastly attempted murder, he brings them in, seats them on a chair.

Policemen simply stayed quiet, as the young man hears the bump-bump-thump-thump increase in intensity and loudness. He is quite sure that the policeman can hear the thumping of the heart, but are simply keeping quiet, waiting for him to confess. The intensity, the bump-bump, the thump-thump grows. And, finally in a shriek of madness, he gets up, and confesses the fact that he has killed this older man. The police are shocked, because they hadn’t heard a heartbeat. The young man was hearing his own bump-bump-thump-thump of his own heart. The *Tell-Tale Heart*.

Restlessness translates to no peace. With all your self-smugness, your stupid hard-heartedness, your hard-fisted rebellion, there is still a bump-bump, and a thump-thump in your heart. Nobody else knows what you’ve been, what you’ve done, as late as last night. Restlessness is no peace.

A second tell-tale sign of lostness may be called worthlessness. Worthlessness. . . where you don’t sense that you have any value, or worth, to yourself. You pursue your jobs, your advance degrees, your IPO launches. You pursue your technologic careers, you fly all across the world, but somehow you don’t feel worth about you. You have image about you, but you don’t have worth. Your wife doesn’t value you, your husband doesn’t value you, your parents don’t value you, and your children don’t value you. The people who should highly regard you downgrade because we all grow older, we get sick, we lose jobs, as some of you have experienced. The biggest businesses go bust, the dot coms become dot bombs.

Many of you read that the Sultan of Brunei’s brother has just squandered away fifteen billion dollars. Not million, but billion dollars. They sold his stuff in a garage sale last week in Brunei. Worthlessness. He was a man of super-luxury, not just luxury, but super-vanity. Worthlessness. You have no respect. . . a sign of lostness.

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There is a third sign of lostness. Along with restlessness and worthlessness is alone-ness. Aloneness is a hopelessness because you are alone. I mean you are in the middle of hundreds, thousands or millions, but you are wondering who are they? Who am I? After all is said and done, you are left to yourself. You've got to make the decisions. Asian and African cultures are fully communal in intent and under girding, but yet you feel alone. Do you know why? In philosophy we call it cosmic alienation, or existential alienation. The sense of feeling abandoned by God.

Now, alone-ness is different from loneliness. When I am traveling, I am lonely for my family, but that's different from alone-ness. And so, you pursue some way of making yourself recognized. I can go on. If any of these three resonate with your heart, with your tell-tale soul. If somehow you sense you are lost because you are restless, you feel worthless, you are alone. I only speak to each of you as individuals, because that's how God goes after you, as though you were the only one.

I've got great news for you. If you think there is a lostness in your heart, if there is an alone-ness in your soul, if there is a yearning in your being, I've got great news for you. It comes from a parable, which the Lord Jesus gave in, what we call, the lost and found department of the Bible. There are three stories like this. God's hide and seek box, as it were. These are stories of how God goes after you, as an individual, as a person. He wants to find you and you are running away. He pursues you, even as you pursue Him. He goes the ultimate distance in order to rescue you from your lostness.

There are two parts to this story. The first part is simply one lost sheep. One lost person. The shepherd goes after his sheep. One lost sheep. The second part of the story is one found sheep. One found person. The shepherd finds this person, and throws a heaven of a party. One lost person, one found person. The shepherd goes after him, finds her or him, and throws a party.

First, one lost sheep. You are the lost person and the shepherd goes after you. The story goes, "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine, and go after the one who is lost?" This is a very typical Middle-Eastern event, perhaps we are not as used to it, in this part of the world. But at the end of the day, the shepherd brings his sheep home, after protecting them all day. After nurturing them, feeding them, disciplining them, all day, he guides them home. But, there is an intuitive sense that one is lost.

Now, the shepherds in that day, did not count sheep like the stadium counts people in a turn style, one, two, three, through ticker tapes perhaps. No, they intuitively knew. In this economic down sizing we have gone through, I am told, that there are many who have lost jobs. And so, a Texan farmer, attempted to help the Indian, and Chinese community by hiring some of them as his best statisticians, counters, and accountants, and technicians.

He first called an Indian young man, and said, "You've lost your job. I want to give you

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another job. I want you to help me, because my property is very, very impressive. I get up in the morning. In my car, I drive all day. At dusk, I've still not come to the edge of the property." The Indian engineer said, "Sir, in India too, we have cars like that. They break down all the time, and at the end of the day, we still don't come to the end of the property."

The Texas farmer said, "Let's cancel the Indians. Let's get the Chinese." So he got a wonderful Chinese young man, a fast counting statistician. He says, "Jump in my plane." He took him for a ride, over his ranch. He said, "I want you to tell me, how many sheep I have." Well, this young engineer looked to the outside for about thirty seconds. He said, "Sir, you have three thousand, six hundred, and seventy-three sheep." The Texan said, "What? You've already counted. That's exactly right. How did you manage that?" The young Chinese engineer said, "That was simple, Sir, I just counted the feet, and divided by four."

Now, that is not how the shepherd knew his sheep was lost. He intuitively knew his sheep was lost. Only one sheep. But beyond the story line is the point. The point is that the Lord Jesus goes after you because you are the one sheep that is lost. Now, why does God go after you? How does He go after you? When does He go after you? He's going after you right now, even as you listen to this talk.

God's search for you is extensive in scope, and expensive in cost. His search for you is extensive. He scours the world, all across this world. You are one sheep in a hundred, one sheep actually in six billion plus, and growing. God's search is extensive in scope. His extensive search tells me that you are very valuable. You are very valuable to God.

Listen, my friend, if you have hundred ball-point pens, and you lost one, you won't go after that one ball-point pen, unless it was valuable. If you had a hundred golf balls, and if you lost one golf ball, you won't go after that, unless it was valuable. God says, "I want to search this world, scour this world, pursue you through out this whole world. Wherever you go. Whether you get on a boat, get on a plane, wherever you go. You go to work in the morning, come back at night, and you are restless, and you are anxious, you are feeling worthless, and alone. I want to tell you that you are valuable." A South African sheep farmer friend of mine is big, large, strong powerful man. He grew up in a sheep farm, and he says, "For a few minutes we would leave our sheep, and go to the store or pursue a chore. The only time I have seen big, strong men cry," this farmer friend of mine said, "Was when they came home to see a sheep that was molested by wild animals, ravaged by hyenas." He said, "Theses big, strong, powerful men would hold their injured sheep close to the heart and weep."

If one sheep is missing, God's search is extensive. You are very valuable. Nobody else may think you are valuable. Your employer may not, your employee may not, your wife may not, your husband may not, your parents may not, your friends may not, and your children may not. But, God thinks you are valuable. That's why there is only like you. You are unique in the whole wide world.

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But, God's extensive search also shows me that you are vulnerable. You are open game! If the demons do not get you, there's a propensity inside you to self-destruct. That's why you do the things that you do. You are vulnerable, to a hundred million seductive voices, which seek to squeeze you.

A friend of mine recently lost his twenty-three year old son to a suicide. He didn't know his son was that vulnerable. Twelve year old, Michael Betstien, one day saw his one year old, gray colored, shorthaired pointer dog, Lorlee leave his home, He had escaped from the front yard. He immediately knew what was happening. He strapped on his roller blades and began to follow this dog. The dog unfortunately ran on to the State highway next to his house. It began to run and Michael followed his dog, afraid for what would happen to this dog. The dog went into a swamp; Mike went into the swamp. Through the woods, Mike went to the woods. It scampered out of reach and came back on State highway 45 and twelve-year-old Michael came back on State highway 45 following his dog for seventeen miles. Shortly before midnight, wham, a car hit the dog, and the dog was injured. Lorlee was lying injured as Michael picked the dog and put it close to his chest until it died.

God pursues you and pursues you. There is hope until you die. Recently my family and I had the opportunity of being at the Masai Marah, one of the great safari spot's in the world. Our tour driver was also a Masai warrior. I quizzed him about shepherding sheep. He said, "I never give up, even if one is missing. I only give up, when I find it dead." God doesn't give up on you as long as you are alive. Injured on a highway, yes, but He never gives up on you. God's search is extensive. It shows you are valuable. It also shows you are vulnerable.

But, God's search is also expensive in cost. Extensive in scope, but expensive in cost. When God decided to go after you, it was expensive. The shepherd left the ninety-nine, back in the protective fold, and now being so concentrate, on the one who is lost. He left his ninety-nine with another trustworthy shepherd, and goes to the edge, goes to fight off any predators in your life. Even if it means that He will be hurt in the process. It's expensive in cost. God's pursuit for you is not cheap for Him. It's not easy for Him. You make it difficult for Him in the first place.

Raymond Frazier was a father in Providence Rhode Island in North America. His son got angry with him, ran outside, and started Raymond's car. Raymond knew exactly what his son, caught in the cesspool of sin, yielding to its seductions, and addictions, was doing. He ran outside with his pajamas, and he pleaded with his son, saying, " Don't run away, son. Don't go." The son attempted to mow his father over with his own car. Raymond stepped aside, jumped on the windshield and pleaded with his son, "Don't run away, son. Don't run away."

The son backed up the car and Raymond held on to the windshield frame of the car. The car went through red lights, high speeds, and finally when the police stopped him, the

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Captain said, "The father was standing there, with his shirt ripped off, his shoes fallen off, and his pants, trousers having fallen to his feet. When he finally came to a stop, Raymond was thrown off the hood of the car. After all this, the father was still pleading with his son to come back.

Now, you if think that's sad, God went the greater distance for you. You think that's bad; God went the ultimate distance for you, my friend. God went much further than Raymond went for his son. Perhaps you have heard it in school or in a classmate's room by a friend. In fact you may have heard it so it becomes so familiar to you that you don't need to hear it again. The starkest possible way to explain this to you is through a painting at the JFK International Airport, New York City. On April 23rd of this year, there was a painting launch called "A Nude Christ", On it Jesus was hanging on a cross, completely, bare naked in the public square.

Some people took exception to the artist who had attempted to portray this, especially people from a religious bent. They asked questions like, how would you like your favorite politician stark naked like this? How do you like your favorite religious teacher? How do you like your favorite national father, or Mahatma Gandhi, or Confucius? How do you like him in front of the whole world un-robed? How do you like a Martin Luther King, or an Abraham Lincoln un-robed? So, they called the artist, and said, "You got to paint, and cover His nakedness." Except God became naked for you.

Let me ask you, my friend, which of all the gods in the whole world was man enough to go after you? Which god in the whole world was humble enough to drop his trousers so you can be found? God's search is extensive in scope, but expensive in cost, because He's going after you today. One lost sheep, the shepherd goes the distance to find him. The second part of this wonderful story is one found sheep. One found sheep and heaven throws a party. The shepherd throws a heaven of a party. It's found in verse 5, "When he has found it, the shepherd lays it on his shoulder rejoicing." God's celebration, when He finds you, is explosive. In the Middle East, when a shepherd finds his sheep, they put him in the most protected place there was. . . on the shoulder of the shepherd. One commentary says that the shepherd came back rejoicing in triumphant air.

He's found you. He's rejoicing. It's explosive, look at it. (Verse 6) "When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep, which was lost.' " Actually the word joy or rejoice is found three times in this parable, because this is an atmosphere of joy, an environment of celebration. Better than the best food offered to you at the Chinese New Year. Better than the best fireworks happening in a Diwali celebration. Better than the lights dropping along with the bell at Times Square in New York City on New Years Eve when the New Years comes to pass. Better than the biggest noise that can ever be created at a stadium after a win of World Championship in cricket, Rugby, or Football. That's how God celebrates your rescue! In a moment, even if one of you, just one of you becomes found, heaven will throw a party. It's the most incredible thing, which happens, a celebration!

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Not only does the shepherd rejoice by himself. It says he calls his friends. He says, "Aye, look, what's happened. This man, this woman, this young lady, this young child was lost. I mean all of his life I pursued him, but now he has let me find him, rescue him. He got found, he got found."

Now, comes the point of the story. While God's celebration is explosive, His condition for being found is exclusive. He's exclusive. Look at verse 7, "I tell you," the Lord Jesus says, "In the same way, that there will be more joy in heaven, over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." God's condition is exclusive.

This was a story said in the context of righteous people who thought themselves righteous. And some of you think of yourself as righteous. You are going to church, temple, or mosque? You've been very, very serious about doing good things. Some days you have a spring of generosity, which envelops your heart that you give it away. You have tried to find jobs for your neighbors who have lost their employment. You've tried to give encouragement. You weep with those who weep. You think of yourself as righteous. But if you think of yourself as righteous, the Lord Jesus is saying that's the first indication that you are lost.

Listen very carefully. Thinking you are not lost is the ultimate sign of your lostness. If you are sitting here and saying that does not apply to me, it's either because you've already been found or you don't think you are lost. If you don't think you are lost, here is the condition. It's exclusive. It's the one sinner who repents.

That's the condition of repentance. Now what is repentance? Let me give you three aspects of repentance. First, repentance is acknowledging that you are lost. If you don't acknowledge you are lost, you'll never want to be found. If you sit here, a little defensive, if you sit here rationalizing your worthlessness, and restlessness, and alone-ness, you are lost. Just acknowledge you are lost.

Second, repentance is letting God rescue you. Letting God find you. You've got two options. One, think of yourself as righteous, saying, I will find myself. Look at what job you've done with yourself so far. Not a very good job. But when you let God rescue you, see that's where you are different from the sheep. A sheep does not have to let the shepherd rescue it. But you as human beings, you are different than sheep. You have to say, "Yes, I want to let God rescue me, find me."

Sometime ago in Spain, a young man ran away from his father into the main city of Madrid. The father pursued him to the main city, attempting to find him. He looked at his relative's homes. He looked at places where he thought he would find his son. He could not. Someone gave him an idea. They said, "Maybe you should take a classified add in the newspaper. Perhaps your son will read it and respond to your initiative."

So that day he went to the newspaper and said, "Sir, tomorrow morning, I would like you

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to place a classified add." This is how it read. It said, "My dear Paco, my dear Paco," Paco is a nickname, a term of endearment for children. "All is forgiven, meet me at 9 A.M at the Central Station, Platform Number one. Nine O'clock in the morning, Central Station, Platform Number one. Father has come to take you home."

The next morning the father went early. He could hardly sleep at night, of course. As the clock was ticking towards 9am, the story goes that seven hundred Paco's showed up. Seven hundred Paco's showed up.

If there is something tugging in your heart, right now, today, you go let God rescue you. He says to you, "My friend, my son, my daughter, meet me today." Acknowledging that you are lost. Let God find you.

Thirdly, repentance is letting the Lord Jesus carry you back home. The shepherd hoists the sheep on his shoulder and carries him back home. The question is whether you would let Jesus carry you back home. You not only have to say, "I am lost. I want God to find me." You are saying "Lord Jesus, you went the distance, paid the expensive cost, did the extensive search, in order to find me. You died on the cross, instead of me. And now you wanted to find me, and I can trust You because you rose again from the dead, so you can find me. I want to trust, and rest on you. I want to trust, and rest on you. Take me back home."

That's what matters. You know hell's parties are on earth, not in the future. The best party hell can throw is right now. But God throws a heaven of a party, over one sinner who repents. One. . . that's all is needed. One and multiples of one, wonderful, but only one needed. This could have happened in Shanghai or Singapore. It could have happened in Chennai or in Abu Dhabi.

There's an old story of a young man on a train, who has buried his head into his hands, and into his lap, weeping. The older man who is his co-passenger looks at him, and says, "Son, is there anything I can help you with?" And the young man says, "No." He buries his head into his hands, and into his lap, and he starts wailing. "Son, there is something I know I can help you with. What is it, son." "Sir, since you asked, I want to tell you, I need your help, because in a few minutes this train is going to pass by what was my house. It's easily identifiable, Sir. It's got a red roof. It's the only red roof in the neighborhood. When I was a young man I rebelled against my father. I stole money from him and his friends and left for the big town. I went and did all the things I wanted to do but I did not find worth, or value, or respect. I did not find rest, and I was alone, Sir."

"I wrote a letter to my father. I didn't give him an address where he could reach me. But I did give him a way to let me know, if he would take me back. In a few moments, you'll see the red roof. In front of the red roof is a tree, because that tree was a tree around which I played marbles, read my books, and climbed, and fell, and broke my shoulder. It's my favorite tree. Sir, I told my father that I am going to go on this train today. If he wanted me back, all he needed to do was put a white flag on that tree. I get on the station,

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and come back home. But if there were no white flag on the tree, I would just go on. Sir, would you kindly look out the window?"

And so, the young man buried his head into hands, and into his lap. For a few moments it was quiet. And then the old man said, "Son, look, look, look, look, look." "Sir, do you see a white flag?" "Yes, but look, you got to look, you've got to look." He looked out the window, he saw the tree, the roof, leaves, fence, everything draped in white. Everything from there to the station was draped in white. His dad wanted him back home.

As he jumped off the train, the father arranged for a party. Not only was his father there, but all the friends from whom he had stolen money. The father had paid them back. And, he said, "Come on home, son." As they took the car back home, it was an open convertible, because a parade had been arranged, because his son had come back home.

You may have been wondering why you are here. You were brought here with an intention. Some of you are here saying for the first time "I've understood this". One lost sheep. . . you may be it. He goes the distance to find you. But today, if you will let Him rescue you, He throws a heaven of a party. Will you get found?

If so, say, "I want to be the sheep that's rescued by the Lord Jesus. I acknowledge that I am lost. I want Him to carry me back home. I didn't know He had gone that kind of a distance for me."

If that is your desire, as honestly as you can in the sanctuary of your soul just say to Him, "I am lost, God." Tell Him, "I want to be found by you. Tell Him that. Say, "I thank you for dying instead of me, on the cross to pay my penalty." Then say, "Thank you for rising again, from the dead to prove to me that you are the only rescuer. I trust in you."