

A RELENTLESS FATHER

1. _____ MATTER TO GOD.

Philip Yancey: If the Milky Way galaxy were the size of the entire continent of North America, our solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Even now two Voyager spacecrafts are hurtling toward the edge of the solar system For almost three decades they have been speeding away from earth, approaching a distance of 9 billion miles. When engineers beam a command to the spacecraft at the speed of light, it takes thirteen hours to arrive. Yet this vast neighborhood of our sun – in truth the size of a coffee cup – fits along with several hundred billion other stars and their minions in the Milky Way, one of perhaps 100 billion such galaxies in the universe.

Psalm 8.3-4: When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?

G. K. Chesterton: All men matter. You matter. I matter. It's the hardest thing in theology to believe.

The Christian faith's most incredible belief: The God who is big enough to speak the universe into existence and hold it in the palm of his hand says you matter to him the way a child matters to a _____.

Matthew 6.9: This, then, is how you should pray: "Our **Father** in heaven ..."

Matthew 7.9-11: Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your **Father** in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Take all the affection, all the concern, all the patience, all the commitment, all the love that the best parent has ever had for his child – and it doesn't come close to the love and concern and commitment God has for you.

And when a son is lost or taken, a father's heart is full of pain and rage and determination to _____.

2. _____ BECOME LOST FROM GOD.

We all end up lost from God and become captive to forces and powers that would demean and destroy us.

Dante Alighieri: Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark,
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.

Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
 What was this forest savage, rough, and stern
 Which in the very thought renews the fear.

I cannot well repeat how there I entered,
 So full was I of slumber at the moment
 In which I had abandoned the true way.

HOW DO WE BECOME LOST FROM GOD?

A. WE BECOME LOST THROUGH OUR _____.

Isaiah 53.6: We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way.

It's the universal story that applies to all of us: we have all chosen to go our way instead of God's way.

And the result is we end up _____ and lost from God.

B. WE BECOME LOST THROUGH OUR _____.

Often because of our wounds and because of our pain, we "turn off" emotionally and spiritually.

We go into our cave where it's dark and we're alone; where no one will follow us; and where we become lost to ourselves and to life and to God.

C. WE BECOME LOST BY BELIEVING THE _____ WE ARE TOLD.

There are two kinds of lies in particular that cause us to become lost from God.

1. The lies we are told is about who _____ is.

If the enemy can cause you to believe a lie about your Father, he can turn you away from his heart and cause you to end up lost and alone.

2. The lies we are told about who _____ are.

These lies attack our true _____.

They want us to define ourselves by our weaknesses, or by our sins, or by the events and failures that shame us, or by our brutality or even by our _____.

The goal of the lie is to place on us an identity that attacks our true selves as sons of God with the result being that we will _____ as something other than the sons of God.

And when we do, we become lost from our true selves and from God.

3. THE HOPE FOR MEN WHO ARE LOST

A. A RELENTLESS FATHER WHO WILL _____ FOR US.

Luke 19.10: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Luke 15.4-6: Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.”

The heart of God is a heart that _____ for the lost even when the reason they are lost is the wrong choices they have made.

Mary Poplin: Jesus, if you are real, please come and get me.

B. A RELENTLESS FATHER WHO WILL RECLAIM AND _____ US.

Luke 15.10: Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

Next week's message is based on the movie “Mr. Holland's Opus.” You can watch it on Amazon Prime.

Honduras Mission Trip: November 3-6

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