

Getting lost

Julian Smith *reflects on* 1 Timothy 1:12-17 and Luke 15:1-10

It's hard to believe, but the renowned cellist Yo Yo Ma once left his cello in a New York taxi cab. The story has a happy ending, as the two were soon reunited, but he must have suffered some agonising moments until that happened.

Was the cello lost, or simply misplaced? Being lost is the thread from which today's Bible readings hang. Paul was a lost sinner whom Jesus found, forgave and entrusted with a mission to the world. In Luke's Gospel Jesus tells stories of a lost sheep and a lost coin.

Jesus describes the risks the shepherd takes to look for the lost sheep. He leaves the flock unattended to find it. He also describes the tenacity of the woman in her search for the coin and her joy in finding it. Later in Luke's Gospel (19:10), Jesus says, "The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

The world is full of the lost and Jesus longs to be beside them all. If Teresa of Ávila is right when she says that: "Christ has no body now on earth but ours," he can only do it through us. Our readings tell us that no one is lost to God – our experience tells us that many are misled by the Church. 🙏

Lord Jesus, you came to seek and save those who are lost. Thank you for finding me and calling me to walk with you. Help me to share your love with those who are lost, lonely and vulnerable, and never to forget your grace. Amen.



How to keep faith in a wobbling world

Part 2 – embrace uncertainty

by Caroline Hodgson

Standing before God in the burning bush, Moses queried the mission he was given, to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. What shall I say, he asked, "If... they ask me, 'What is his name?'"

The Bible is full of examples of people who hesitated to trust God. From Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), Moses (Exodus 3:2-14) and Jonah (chapters 1 – 3) in the Old Testament, to Thomas (John 20:24-29), Peter (Luke 22:54-62) and even

John the Baptist (Matthew 11:2-3) in the New Testament.

In times of uncertainty, when the world feels wobbly and we're struggling to stay grounded, these are good passages to read, slowly and prayerfully. Does the story resonate with my experience? Is there a message here for me? Can I take comfort from the examples of these great people of faith? Then meditate on the words that God said to Moses all those years ago: "I am who I am," and take comfort that our God watches over us in our wobbling world. 🙏

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

On our smallholding we don't plough the fields and scatter. Instead we graze the fields and plant the polytunnel. The harvest is different from what the hymn describes but no less hard work. This is our concentrated harvesting time, from gathering windfall apples to feed the pigs, through picking and freezing tomatoes, gathering plums, slaughtering the spare drakes and finally the pigs for the

freezer. Then there's packing the meat and labelling it, making pâté from livers and cooking up any scraps for the dogs.

There's not much romance to harvesting, though it has lovely moments. It's basic hard work for surviving the winter and into spring. Climate change makes it more urgent. God is in there somewhere I know but I can't quite put my finger on it. Does that matter? Actually no, since God is through all and in all. We give thanks! 🙏

“Pray as you can, and do not try to pray as you can't.”

Dom John Chapman OSB (1865-1933) English Roman Catholic priest