

DAY 2

help of university police, we frantically searched all four floors of that building, eventually spilling out into the parking lot and covering the four city blocks of the campus. She was completely lost.

LOST: PARABLE OF THE FATHER'S HEART BY ELI GAUTREAUX|TEXAS

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost."

LUKE 19:10

Several years ago, my family and I attended a conference on a university campus. One afternoon our 4-year-old went missing from the student center where I had been working. As it became apparent that my little girl was lost, my heart sank, and with each passing moment I began to feel more and more nauseous. Words cannot describe the depth of anguish and despair I felt that day. With the

In Luke 15, we read Jesus' three parables about lost things—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost sons. Contextually, however, the emphases lay not on the things lost, but rather on those to whom the lost things belonged—the shepherd, the woman, the father. The third parable is frequently called the Parable of the Prodigal Son—but as G. Campbell Morgan suggested, perhaps a better name would be the title he chose for his book, *The Parable of the Father's Heart*, for in this story we see the broken heart of God revealed. This father was actively watching, waiting, and yearning to be reunited with his lost child. That is exactly the way God feels about every one of His children who are lost and separated from Him.

Morgan wrote in *The Great Physician*: "It is well now to remind ourselves that when we speak of a lost man or woman, the final emphasis in our thinking should not be on the lost person, but on the one who has lost that person. **When we speak of a man being lost, do we think most about his suffering, or of the suffering of God?"** When the

devil has kidnapped a child of God, it is God who hurts the deepest, who suffers most. His heart is broken as He can foresee the inevitable consequence of lost relationship—eternal separation. When I remember the way I felt about my one lost child, I cannot begin to imagine the Father's exponential pain over the multitude of His lost children from every corner of the earth. When my daughter was lost, I wanted everyone everywhere to drop what they were doing and help me find her. It was inconceivable to me that anyone, especially those I loved most, would be able to rest until she was safely found.

In 2 Samuel 23, we read about three of David's mighty men who heard a sigh from their king's lips—his simple longing for a drink of water from the well near the gate at Bethlehem. Risking their own lives, they crossed enemy lines in the dark of night and retrieved the drink of water for their king. It is clear that these three men were close enough to their king, in proximity but more importantly in relational intimacy, to hear the longing of his heart. They were never given a command. Their king's longing became their immediate, voluntary, and dangerous mission.

After the longest hour of my life—in which every passing minute felt like an eternity—we found our

daughter. The moment I saw her, I had an instant understanding of the joy in heaven that erupts when a lost person is reunited with the Father. I cried out with happiness and could not stop hugging her. The intensity of the darkness that had accompanied her loss was matched only by the elation I felt when I held her in my arms again.

LIVE DEAD CHALLENGE

Today as you pray, rather than pouring out *your* heart to God, ask Him to pour *His* heart to you. Our King is a wonderful and loving Father who suffers deeply at the loss of His children. If we love Him, we will listen. Eventually we will feel His broken heart. If we love Him we will, like the mighty men of old, make His longing our mission no matter what the risk. What is the cry of God's heart? He is weeping over His lost children, watching, waiting, and yearning for them to come home.