

(Luke 15:1-10, NIV84)

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Then Jesus told them this parable: "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.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Last week a thought popped into my head about a certain black canvas CD holder. I have been missing a certain compact disc that contains some favorite music. It suddenly occurred to me that I hadn't seen that old black canvas CD holder in a while. I decided to search for it in the most likely places. After all, it was black, it shouldn't be that hard to find. It wasn't in the trunk of my car, so I started hunting in my home office. After looking around the obvious and open places in the room, I finally looked in a cupboard beneath a black bookshelf -- a place not exposed to direct light. At the very back of that black cupboard, behind a couple of black boxes, as if it were hiding from me, I found it. And guess what, when I opened it up, there was my beloved CD that I had been missing! That old, black canvas CD holder nestled in the darkness, unnoticed for who knows how long, would have sat in that dark corner for who knows how much longer if I hadn't deliberately been looking for it.

Who do you know that is like my old CD holder -- someone who is sitting in the darkness of unbelief, as if hiding, who needs desperately to be found? Perhaps a name or a face is popping into your head at this very moment, or maybe the one needing to be found is someone whom you've never met. Ask the Lord to guide you to that precious soul and, when you find that person, to give you the words (His words) to speak -- words of hope, words of love, words of redemption and salvation, words that tell of Jesus' life and death and resurrection -- saving words, life-changing words. Then you, along with the angels, can rejoice!

In Christ, searching with you for the lost,
Pastor Golm

April 20

Joy in the Father's House

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15:7

What is it that makes the angels glad? Not the earth-shaking headlines that shout from our daily newspapers. Not the news of victory on earth's great battlefields. Not even the cheering reports of mankind's most noteworthy achievements. But, rather, the thrilling news of "one sinner that repenteth": the joyful news that a wayward wanderer has been stopped short on the road to ruin and has been placed on the road that leads to the Father's house.

"One sinner that repenteth." That was you and I! There was joy among the family of heaven when through Holy Baptism or through the preaching of the Gospel we were born into the family of God. What a cheering comfort to know that we are not unwanted children in the Father's house, but that our birth into the heavenly family was an occasion for rejoicing among the company of heaven!

"One sinner that repenteth." That might also be that unbelieving friend with whom we come in daily contact. The man who works at the bench next to ours in the factory. The girlfriend with whom we eat lunch each day. The acquaintance whom we meet in the grocery store several times each week and with whom we normally engage in conventional chitchat.

Have we done all in our power to bring these people into the circle of the Father's children through faith in the Redeemer? There will be joy in the Father's house the day we bring them in. There is room for all. There is love for all.

Today our Father calls us, His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather Around the heavenly gates.
No questions will be asked us, How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered, it is our FATHER'S home!

Lord, let me so live that my life may bring joy to the angels about Your throne. Amen.