

Missing

During lockdown many a jigsaw puzzle has been retrieved from the attic and is now on the dining room table in the process of being assembled. For those of us who engage in such pursuits there is nothing more heart-wrenching than coming to the end of the puzzle and finding that one piece is missing. We look everywhere for it.

God is a little like that. It is heart-wrenching for him to find someone missing. Jesus said that God is like a woman who had ten silver coins but has lost one of them.

*Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?
And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says,
"Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." (Luke 15:8,9)*

Or a shepherd who has a hundred sheep and finds that one is not there.

Doesn't he 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. (Luke 15:4,5)

Many of us know what it is like to drift away from God. Where we end up can be a lonely and sometimes rather sad place. We are spiritual people made to experience the life of God. But for some of us it is hard work to go back to God, especially if we have quite a low view of ourselves. We don't feel we are worth much and that undermines our confidence. It is good to be reminded that God is like a father whose son has left home, angry and independent. The father finds it heart-wrenching to think that his boy is alone in a far country. No wonder he is overjoyed when he hears of his son's return.

'But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him, he ran to his son, threw his arms round him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)

God's attention and love is always focused on the missing piece. He is determined to find it, whatever the cost. This is a dark time for many of us. All around us is pain, fear and tragedy. But it is a good time to take stock of where we are and head home to the open arms of God. Why not read Luke 15 as part of your reflection on this theme?