

Sermon for Sunday, May 4, 1975, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor
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"WHEN THE LITTLE LOST LAMB IS YOU"

St. Matthew 10:24-39 18:10-14

Text: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake
will find it."

St. Matthew 10:39

In recent days I have become more deeply impressed than ever before of the lostness among men. God has so many lost sheep today. As you know, I have been gone the last two Sundays. Actually, I was only gone nine days; we left on a Saturday, and we got back Sunday night, late. We went first to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. It is up on Lookout Mountain, overlooking Chattanooga and the beautiful valley there, and it is sort of the executive bedroom of Chattanooga. I was deeply impressed with the people at the church there. There the Presbyterian Church is the largest church by far in Lookout Mountain, and the people who belong to it are the people who make the basic decisions of Chattanooga. They are the executives, they are the professional people who, at the executive level, make many of the decisions that shape the life of that city. And I was profoundly impressed with the fact that though most of them had an abundance of the material things of the world, although they lived in a beautiful setting, although they lived in lovely homes, in many ways they were God's lost sheep. There was a deep hunger in their hearts. They have achieved success in the eyes of the world. I went one day into the office of the president of the twelfth largest insurance company in America. And as he sat there and we talked together, he said to me, "Andy, coming to know Jesus is the most important thing that can happen to me." His young son, who will one day be the executive officer of this great corporation, said to me, "Jesus Christ is the most important person I know."

They are important people, yes. We think of the inner city and the poverty people as being those who have needs but let me tell you that today in affluent America people at the highest levels have desperate needs. They are God's little lost sheep. There's a young man there who will one day be the president of one of the largest candy companies in the world. There's another young man there who will one day be president of one of the largest yarn companies in the world. And these young men who have so much of the things of the world, most of all wanted to know about Jesus Christ. There was another young man, I don't know how old, maybe 32 or 33, already he is a senior vice-president in a savings and loan company--a former marine, a tough sort of guy who said, "I don't know about this Jesus business," but who came to the team meeting the last day to share with us how he had given his life to Christ. He had been a little lost sheep and now he was found.

On the closing night, there in Lookout Mountain, in this austere, beautiful Presbyterian church, I preached about Jesus. And I invited them to accept Him as their Savior. They had never had an altar call in their church. You know, we Presbyterians, we are kind of "God's frozen people. We don't like emotion. (Actually, we make our decisions emotionally, then rationalize why we did it!) But we don't like emotion, and I said we are not going to have any emotion tonight, but if you really mean business about Jesus, if you want to make a first time commitment to Jesus, I want you to get up and walk down front. Believe me, that is hard to do. And some of those who came were Elders in the Church! It took courage to walk down that aisle.

Do you remember Bob Fenn who was the lay coordinator for our lay witness? I said, "Bob, how many people came forward?" He said, "I don't know, when it reached 20 I was crying so hard I couldn't count." I don't know how many people came. Maybe 30 or more, and then I said, "I want everyone here who wants to recommit his life to Christ, who really means business about being God's man, to come forward. The little lost sheep came. I don't know how many. Over 150 came.

And then I said, "I want all those who have had something really beautiful and wonderful happen in their lives, who found a closer walk, who feels closer to the Lord tonight, I want you to come." And that emptied the pews! Over 300 in all.

Oh, yes. People are so hungry today to really know Jesus and to have a close, personal relationship to Him. We left there, Sydney and I. (And God has blessed me with a great helpmate. I watched her grow in the Lord and learn to share with people. I saw her stand in a crowded hall and a young girl sought her out, and there with all those people milling around, Sydney put her arm around her and prayed with her, and the young woman wept. What a joy to see people find the Lord.) And we thought that nothing could be better than what had happened there. We had been on a mountain-top in more ways than one. But we had to go to San Francisco because we were committed to a family conference there. So we went, and the conference center was out in a redwood forest. How beautiful it was! Over 400 people were there from the First Presbyterian Church in San Mateo. It, too, is a sort of executive bedroom community of San Francisco. And out there, coming to talk about the Lord, were key executives and professional people and doctors, coming out because there was something missing in their lives and they were God's little sheep.

I don't know if you know much about San Francisco--it is beautiful, I love to go there--but the people who live there, do you know what they call it? They call it Sodom by the Sea. That is a secular world. It is so different from our culture here. It is truly a secular society. I won't tell you some of the laws that they have had to pass just to keep the worse sort of pornography out of the midst of the people. And there they were, gathered together, God's little lost sheep. And I talked with them about their relationship with Jesus and how to be filled with the Spirit and how to live together as a family. I was supposed to make five talks. Saturday morning, after having been in Chattanooga and then going out there, Saturday morning I had to make a speech at 9:30, turn right around and do another at 11:00, and another scheduled for that night, and I was so tired. And yet, I knew back here at home, that you were sharing with me, and you were holding me up in prayer, and I felt the strength of your prayers as you prayed with me about what I was doing out there, and God blessed me and strengthened me. Saturday night after I finished speaking, they came to me and they said, "Andy, you are to speak at 11:00 in the morning. You are to lead a group. But will you speak to us again at 9:30?" And I said, "Yes." And it was to be followed by Communion. So I talked to them about family relationships, and committing themselves to Jesus Christ to be God's man; and committing their families to Jesus to be God's family, and I said all of those who, while we have been here together, have committed your life or recommitted your life to Jesus and who want to commit your family to being God's family in this world in which you live in here, I just want you to stand up. Don't do it if you are not really serious, but if you mean business with Jesus, I want you to stand up.

There is no way I could count, but over 300 people stood up. Praise God for what he is doing for His little lost sheep. Let me tell you one funny thing that happened in Chattanooga. I was in the pulpit like so, and right down in front of me was a young couple. He had his arm around the back of the pew like this, around his wife. And he was watching, you know, people were coming forward, and he is sitting there watching, and as he watches, suddenly he sees his wife go across. And he looks down. And she is gone. He has the most astonished look on his face. And he bowed his head, and he prayed for a moment, and then he got up and joined her.

And I praise God for little lost sheep coming together as a family in the Lord. I thought about us back here and the kind of a world we live in, and I KNOW that there are little lost sheep this morning, here in our community. And I know that the Good Shephard is seeking the little lost sheep and I just want to share with you this morning three things that I think are really important.

The first thing that I want to share with you is our text for this morning. In order to find life, we must lose it. There is only one thing that can dominate a man's heart and his life. You see, as long as you and I have more than one great dream, we will be torn between the dreams. Man can never really lose himself. Do you remember how Jesus put it? He said no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will cling to the one and despise the other. Therefore, there is only one great dream to which a man can give his life. Most of us are like the man who wrote this little poem,

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord.

Real service is what I desire.

I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
but please don't ask me to sing in the choir.

I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I like to see things come to pass.

But please don't ask me to teach girls and boys, dear Lord,
I can hardly make my own class.

I'll do what you want me to do, dear Lord,

I yearn for your kingdom to thrive,

I'll give you a token of what I have,

but please don't ask me to tithe.

I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,

I'll love you much more than some,

but if our church has service on Wednesday night,

Dear Lord, don't ask me to come."

So then, the first principle for finding yourself is to lose yourself to one great dream. One great dream of the heart for no man can serve two masters.

The second principle for finding yourself is closely tied in with the first. You must lose your life to find it, but you must lose it to something that is worthwhile. The fact of the matter is, many people lose their lives in loyalty to one great dream, but it doesn't satisfy them simply because it is not worthwhile. Billy Graham told me one time of a good friend of his who is a very wealthy man, and when he first met him he grabbed Billy's hand, and he said, "Oh Doctor Graham, it is not worth it. It is not worth it." I had lunch one day in Chattanooga with

the president of one of the biggest banks there, and he had invited some friends in, and I shared with them Jesus Christ. And after the lunch he said, "Andy, will you come down to my office for a while?" And I did. He said, "You know, I worked my way up until I became president of this bank. And then I had another dream of building a big building. Now it is built. And I found that nothing satisfies, and now I want to give my life to Jesus." And one of God's little lost lambs came home. His wife said later on that week, "You can't believe what's happened to my husband." Do you remember the man Jesus talked about who had barns and they just weren't big enough to hold everything he had accumulated and he tore them down and built bigger barns? The Lord said to him, "You fool, tonight your soul is required of you." Do you know why he was the fool? It wasn't because he was wealthy. It was because his wealth was the controlling passion of his life. He had lost himself in a dream. But I want to tell you, big barns are not a worthy dream.

Most of you have heard of Hudson Taylor, if you have been in Sunday school when you were a kid. Hudson Taylor was one of the greatest missionaries, I guess, since St. Paul. Actually, there were two boys in the Taylor family, and the older brother wanted to make a name and a fortune for his family so he turned toward Parliament and fame. But young Hudson turned toward Jesus and gave his life in service as a missionary. When Hudson Taylor died, he was known all over the world. And do you know what happened to the older brother? If you look his name up in the encyclopaedia, guess what it will say? "The brother of Hudson Taylor."

The rich young ruler came to Jesus, and he was a man who had not found himself. He was one of God's little lost sheep. He had a lot of money, the Bible tells us, but he was dissatisfied and unhappy--it had not fulfilled his need. One day, from the deep agony of his heart, he fell down before Jesus, and said, "What must I do to be saved?" And Jesus said to him, "Young man, you get rid of the thing that fills your heart. You get rid of your possessions. Give away all you have to the poor, and come follow me." It wasn't that his money was bad, it was that his money was the object of his love. And Jesus knew that before he could love Jesus, he had to get rid of the other things. But his dream was so great that he could not turn loose. The Bible says he went away sorry.

In order to find yourself, you must first lose your life. Secondly, you must lose it to something that is really worthwhile. And thirdly, the only thing that is really worthwhile is Jesus Christ. Jesus said that he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, he shall find it.

A lot of people have given their lives for secondary goals, but Jesus said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you." For what are you spending your life this morning? To what or to whom are you losing your life today? Are you giving it for your family? Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother is not worthy of me." There are many of you mothers who have invested your total life in just your family. Many of you fathers have done the same thing. And Jesus says that if you love your children more than you love him, you are not worthy of Him. What are you giving your life to? Where are you focusing your energies? Is it to your job? You think about that. What's the focus of your whole life? Is it your job? Is it your family? Is it the attainment of material goals? There is only one thing that is worth your life this morning, and that is Jesus Christ. St. Paul, when a young man, had achieved high status for

one of his years, and he had a lot, but he once wrote, "Ye, doubtless and I count all things as lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and to count them but nothing that I may win Christ."

Yes, what will you give your life to? Are you one of God's little lost sheep? Let me share a poem with you. It is an old poem and, goodness, it's been quoted often, but it fits this morning.

T'was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But held it up with a smile.
What am I bidden, good folks, he cried,
A dollar, a dollar - now two, only two -
Two dollars and who'll make it three?

Three dollars, once, three dollars, twice
Going for three - but no
From the room far back a gray haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
and tightening up all the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as the angels sing.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
with a voice that was quiet and low,
Said; what am I bid for the old violin?
And he held it up with the bow,
A thousand dollars - and who'll make it two?
Two thousand, and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once, and three thousand twice -
And - going, and gone, said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,
We do not quite understand -
What changed its worth? The man replied,
The touch of the master's hand.

There are a lot of little lost sheep who need the touch of the Master's hand. What really makes life worth living--you see, when the little lost sheep is you, what really counts is the touch of the Master's hand.