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Text: Luke 15:1-10  
Date: September 11, 2016  
Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

I don't need to be found!

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear Christian Friends, It's the 11<sup>th</sup> of September....it's September 11<sup>th</sup>. Today is September 11, 2016. It has been fifteen years since that fateful Tuesday morning when our lives were changed forever. I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at the time and remember going in to class in the morning and the TV was on, showing the damage that had been done to the twin towers. I'm sure each and everyone one of us that was living and old enough to remember the event, has memories of where they were when the Twin Towers were hit and collapsed.

In the years to follow, we heard stories and watched documentaries of people that went into the Twin Towers to rescue people. We heard stories of people that made it in and found people and got them out. We also hear stories of emergency personnel, countless NYPD officers, EMT, Firefighters and more going steadfastly into the burning buildings to seek those that needed help and aid, knowing in all of it, this might be the last measure of devotion that they would give to save another life. They were brave men and women.

In our Gospel lesson for this morning we see that Jesus is doing something that was against the social norm of the day. **IT WAS SHOCKING!** The tax collectors and sinner were all approaching him and he wasn't turning them away. Can you believe it? Jesus was socializing with tax collectors and sinners. Oh yeah! You believe it, but... the Pharisees and Scribes grumbled about Jesus and said, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

It can become all too easy to look at others and their actions and make a judgement against them. It was shocking. We become like the Pharisees and Scribes in how we view others. See that man on the street corner...he is a drug dealer. You and I don't want to associate ourselves with people like that. It would tarnish our reputations that we have worked so hard to build. So what we do is build a false sense of pride in our actions. We tell ourselves that we are better than someone else because we do not do "That particular sin." We look at those that are in prison and turn an upturned nose to them.

But then we look at our own lives. There are times that we are pulled away from the flock of God. We wander off, chasing after the sins that tempt us the most. We work to stay true to the shepherd but then find ourselves all by ourselves all on our own. We try to curb that one particular sin, if we can just figure out a way to not do that sin, we would all find our way back. If we can find our way back we don't need to be sought and saved by someone else. We don't

want anyone else to know the ways that we failed, especially God. We see ourselves as not needing to be saved.

I remember years ago, and I am sure many of you experienced this as a young child. You go to the mall, or an amusement park or department store and you are with your family. You stop for a second and look one way and when you look back, your family is gone and you are all by yourself. When you were younger you were scared to be alone without your family. As you grew up, there was still fear but more so embarrassment. I don't want someone to know I got lost, I will find my way back before anyone knows that I am gone. I don't want to be found, I don't want to be saved. We think we can do it on our own, spare our embarrassment, spare our fear. We think we can do it on our own, but we can't.

As those brave men and women rushed into the Twin towers and the pentagon that fateful day 15 years ago, they went for the sake of finding the lost. They went to find the lost and in need. They went to find those in danger and to save. They went head strong into the deteriorating buildings that were unstable and unsafe. Unsafe...Unstable.

Christ came into this world to seek out the lost, the downcast, and those in need of saving. He came into this world filled with sin. This world, though created to be perfect, it deteriorates around us as a result of sin. Sin has its affect on

us and our lives, both in what we do and what is done to us. Christ came into this world knowing that he would give His life, for you and for me. He died and rose to reconcile us to God. We are now part of the 99 within the pasture. We are safe. But we all too often forget that is not where we were originally. We were not always part of the flock. We were called by God. God sought us out. As the shepherd seeks out that lost sheep, we were sought, gathered and brought into the flock.

What then are we called to do? Our theme for the next year is "Immeasurably More."

Christ did immeasurably more for us than we could ever want or need. "As Christians we are called to do Immeasurably more because through His life death and resurrection, we can do immeasurably more."

This looks like when you go into a store you ask the greeter how they are doing before they can greet you. When you are in the checkout line and the cashier asks if you found everything ok, you ask how their day is going. When you are talking to friends about weekend plans and invite them to come to worship with you that weekend. When you pray before you eat in a restaurant. These are some ways that we can bear Christ to others.

We are called to go out and seek the lost sheep in the world. We are called to go out to where the people are that need to hear the Word of God preached to

them. We can rejoice for the sinner that repents. We are called to use the gifts and talents that God has given us, with which we can do "immeasurably more" to seek the lost in our community and the world.

Christ sought you and I out, and died on the cross and rose so that we could share His story with others and have life with Him. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21