A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft
8592 – "When You Realize You're Lost"
Luke 15:17

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You may have noticed firstborn children are usually known for their independence, which can sometimes get them in trouble. When our daughter was four years old, we were on a family shopping trip to the local grocery store. Her little brother was riding in the cart and our daughter was walking ahead of Mom and me and the cart. At a moment when we were looking at the corn flakes or something, she wandered off and into another aisle. To this day she still remembers the panic of realizing she did not know where she was or where we were. She told me, "The aisle looked so long, the shelves looked so high, and I didn't recognize anybody." Suddenly, our little girl realized she was lost.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **"When You Realize You're Lost."**

Our daughter never meant to get separated from her parents, but suddenly she was lost. Maybe you've never meant to get separated from your Heavenly Father, but you are. And you're realizing that you're lost.

Jesus said we're like sheep. And I don't think a sheep wakes up one day and says, "I'm tired of the shepherd. I think I'll just run away from Him." Sheep don't run away; they wander away. Just a little off the shepherd's path to check out that tuft of grass, then up that hill, then over the hill, until suddenly the sheep says, "Hey! Where's my shepherd?"

Maybe that's your story. You never meant to get this far from God. But one wandering step at a time, you've ended up farther from your Lord than you ever thought you'd get, maybe doing things you never thought you would do—trying to get other things to meet needs in you that Jesus once met. And those other things aren't working.

So how do you get back? The same way the prodigal son got back to his father. Jesus described it this way, "He set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth...he had spent everything." So he ended up feeding pigs—not exactly his dream when he left his father. Now he's covered with shame and pig slop.

Jesus says in Luke 15, beginning with verse 17, our word for today from the Word of God, "he came to his senses. He said...'I will set out and go back to my father and I will say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.'...So he got up and he went to his father."

You wandered away from Jesus, but you can't wander back. You have to decide that this is your last day away from home. This is the day you're getting up and you're going

home to your Father. A lot of things might be holding you back: your shame over what you've done, which God is ready to trade for His forgiveness today; your fear of failing, which God is ready to replace with His strength; or your unwillingness to let go of your idols, wondering if you can do without them now. You've forgotten that the cost of not following Jesus is far greater than the cost of following Him. You've lived that one haven't you?

It's never going to be easier to start back home to Jesus than it is today. Every day you wait, the ropes that are holding you get tighter and tighter. Every day you wait, your heart's getting harder. You've been lost long enough. Listen, it's time to come home to Jesus. And you may have never even begun a relationship with Him. Well, this is the day you can go to the one who was meant to be your Heavenly Father and be born into his family.

There's information about how to be sure you've begun that relationship at our website ANewStory.com. This could be the beginning of your new story today. I hope you'll go there to get that information.

Your Heavenly Father is waiting right now to welcome you home with arms wide open. He's been waiting for you. Don't waste another day. This could be your personal Homecoming Day!

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