

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 19) – September 14, 2025

*“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God
over one sinner who repents.”*

- Luke 15:10-

The Angels Rejoice

Jesus loved the tax collectors and the sinners, so much so that He was willing to set aside societal expectations to have dinner with them. The Pharisees and scribes grumbled about it, but Jesus reminded them through parables that God would find and save the lost who listen to His Word and trust in Him.

There is a time and a place for warning, for speaking the Law, for calling people to repentance. God’s Word is both Law and Gospel. The Law calls us to repent, to turn to God. The Gospel is the promise that assures us that He has provided for our forgiveness. We are encouraged to see ourselves as God sees us: the good, the bad, and the ugly. We are not more righteous than others just because we are not guilty of their sins. We are still guilty. We need God’s grace as much as they. We get lost, too, by turning our back on God or by being led in the wrong direction. We need to repent daily, to receive God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ, to be transformed by His Word.

Jesus didn’t tell the Pharisees that the tax collectors and sinners were good, only that they were in need and that they were willing to listen. It was their willingness that Jesus commended: they had been lost and now they were found. He was rejoicing with them because they saw the reality of their sinfulness and had turned to the only one who could grant them true forgiveness.

As we recognize ourselves in these stories, we cry out to God and ask for His mercy knowing He is faithful to His promises. We were lost, but Jesus found us, saved us, and restored us to a relationship with our God. He has promised to search for all those who are lost, and when He finds them, He will carry them on his shoulders, rejoicing with the angels just as He did for us.