

## **Hinde Street Methodist Church**

15 September 2019 10.00am

Rev Peter Cornick

Archbishop, John Sentamu tells a story about Beverley Minster.

A small group of young people were concerned that the Christian message was fading amongst their generation. So, they began a youth café on a Friday evening.

It served hot chocolate and homemade cakes – because you can always get a good supply of home-made cakes in a church.

It was basically a drop in centre for teenagers. It was not a Bible study group.

At first, fifteen youngsters turned up. Next month, about thirty, the following month, about one hundred. In fact it became so popular and essential to the young people of Beverley, numbers were limited.

The youth café was about building bridges between the church and the community. Breaking down the barriers between a cathedral and young people.

There were some who started grumbling.

These young people come to the minster and play their music, but hear nothing of the gospel, nothing of Jesus. It's all fun and games but no faith.

It so happened that tragically, a young girl in Beverley, took her own life. The leaders of the youth café thought of all the young people who came on a Friday. How would they feel? This being early in the week, perhaps they should wait for Friday and talk to the youngsters then. But instead, they decided to open the minster, from 9 in the evening to twelve, in case anyone wanted to come and pray to remember the young girl. They put this message out on social media.

The minister would be open for prayer – and someone to talk to. Perhaps a few teenagers might turn up.

Over two hundred teenagers turned up. With their parents. The minster was full. They lit candles; sat in silence; prayed; talked to the youth café leaders.

**They came to pray, because they had been welcomed to play.**

Two points:

**First**, it is a story about those who seek.

The people of the minster were wanting to seek those who had not experienced the love of God. Those who had no idea what church was like. Perhaps the reason for the people of the minster seeking, was because those in the minster felt incomplete. They needed those other youngsters from Beverley to make them complete.

Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, and the lost coin, describes a situation where the one who is lost, can do nothing about being lost. The sheep is not able to find its way home. A coin is, well a coin!

The lost needs to be found.

It is the shepherd, and the woman, who do the seeking, the finding.  
**They take the initiative.**

The two stories describe the nature of God. God who takes the initiative. God who seeks us out. God who's kingdom is incomplete without that one who is lost.

**Second**, - this story about the youngsters in Beverley, is a story about unlikely people, being welcomed into the kingdom. I hesitate to say 'outcasts' – just unlikely.

It is important here, to look at the context of the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. We might hear sermons – very good ones, on searching for the lost – which point us to evangelism. But look at the reason for Jesus telling these two stories – in fact three stories – the prodigal son comes next!

15. 1-2

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were grumbling. About the sort of people Jesus eat with. The sort of people he invited into the kingdom.

If you remember, some of the people of Beverley were uncomfortable about the sort of people who were being found. What the youth café was or wasn't doing. What's the point of all these teenagers?

Jesus tells these two parables, because people were grumbling. And Jesus wants to say, the kingdom is for everyone, particularly the excluded. There will be great joy in heaven, at the one who is found.

1. So these two parables, imply that the lost are those who, like the sheep, and the coin, need finding.
2. And that we, like God, - or the people of Beverly, need to take the initiative.
3. And – be prepared unlikely people will be those who are found!

### ***Conclusion***

But perhaps Jesus is also saying: the lost are those people who keep grumbling about those who are found. Jesus in the parables often turns them back on the people he is addressing.

The nature of God, is that he seeks the lost, and rejoices when they are found.

And to those who would grumble, he says, Come, celebrate, I tell you, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents.

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