

The Lost Coin: A Call to Intercession for the Unreached

by Mary Mejia

One day not too far from today, it will happen! Somewhere, somehow, with God's grace we will do the seemingly impossible. We will make disciples of all nations. We will fulfill the Great Commission!

God knew that we'd accomplish the task—He has faith in us. Believers will come together in unity to evangelize the world. We will come together and break down the barriers of denominational and cultural differences. We will break down the barriers of language and theological obstacles in the pursuit of the Great Commission.

Never before in world history has there been such an opportunity to reach the world for Christ! God has placed the vision to reach the world in the hearts of many missionaries, church and ministry leaders, and lay persons—men, women and children from many countries.

The stage is set... believers have made a decision to work together to seek conversions among the many peoples of the earth. Denominations have decided to work together—mission agencies are cooperating toward common goals—churches are hearing the clarion call, "A Church For Every People." Barriers to working together are being broken and unprecedented unity is being attained. (Psalm 133:1)

New technologies are in place: Computer advances, improved modes of travel, new communication tools. All these make the potential of reaching the world by the year 2000 a foreseeable reality. Small bands of intercessors have been praying for years for spiritual awakening. The intercessors, scattered all over the world, have been faithfully praying for the Body of Christ to take responsibility for world evangelization. (Matt. 28:19)

An Absolute Necessity

Prayer is an absolute necessity for effective evangelism. We must pray that Bibles and other teaching materials will get to their destinations. We must pray for openness in the hearts of those who will listen to the message of the Cross.

While He was on the earth, Jesus shared many parables with the people who gathered around him. On one occasion, he pulled back the curtain revealing a picture, one which very likely he had received in his "quiet time" with his Father. The picture of spiritual reality he presented was the following:

"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:8-10)

This parable is often used when we discussed personal evangelism. We encourage evangelists to continue pursuing the lost, even as the woman pursued the lost coin. We use this story when we invite sinners to repent and become converted. We share these stories with our young people, telling them of the importance of coming to Christ and the joy the Father has for us as we become part of his family.

But there is a further meaning to this parable, especially for intercessors. As prayer partners with God on behalf of the lost, we have a tremendous responsibility as well as a tremendous privilege. We have the opportunity to experience God's heart for the lost. To know how much God loves people is not easy to explain to

those who do not pray in these areas.

As intercessors, we know the deep love and commitment God has made to see the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We know how the woman felt as she was searching her house for that lost coin. In this parable, we see a woman who is diligently searching for that precious object. That was not her pocket change. She did not have more money in the bank. In fact, one source states that this money might have been her dowry money.¹

So this money is very important. These ten coins were very precious to the woman. Losing one of the coins was a serious loss. Jesus describes what she did:

1) She lit a lamp.

The lamp Jesus describes here is the Greek word *luchnos*, describing a hand-held lamp fed by oil. This was not a candle or a torch, but was a lamp designed for a closer search. This was not the regular lighting that would light the house, but a portable light that could be used to search all of the corners of the house.

The significance for intercessors in this part of the parable, is that the intercessor must pray that those who are targeting these "lost coins", receive illumination on the research they are doing. Research which has been touched by the Spirit, is like a lamp which sheds tremendous light on the task facing the missionary. Prayer must also pave the way so that mission teams can develop the best strategies to reach the people.

2) She swept the house

If a small object is lost, often the best way to search for that object is to sweep the floor—reaching all the corners. This consists of an intensive search, often finding the smallest objects. Sweeping often

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brings interesting things into the light.

Intercessors must pray for God's provision of the proper tools to reach the people group, whether it be the Jesus Film, radio broadcast, tracts, etc. The door-to-door teams, the evangelists, and missionaries, all need prayer to find those who will listen to the message.

3) *She searched carefully until she found the coin.*

The woman is tenacious about the importance of finding the coin. She does not give up, but continues until she finds it. Intercessors must pray that missionaries will be resolute in leading the lost to Christ, that they will continue "sweeping" the area until they are found.

4) *She called her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her.*

When a woman does "spring cleaning" the neighbors know about it. Sometimes furniture is pulled out of the house. Rugs and pillows are aired. Other materials are washed and put on the clothesline. It is not a hidden undertaking. If the woman were resolute in finding the coin, her pursuit would be heard! And finding the coins—especially an important coin—would be a good reason for rejoicing.

Can you imagine the joy intercessors bring to God's heart as they "partner" with Him to pray for unreached peoples?! Intercessors must take time to rejoice as God is bringing spiritual awakening to people who have not had the opportunity to hear about Jesus! In prayer, an intercessor prays for those who will go to the unreached peoples of the world. The intercessors pray for blinders to be removed from the eyes of the unreached peoples, so that they can receive the gospel with glad and receptive minds. Intercessors pray for those missionaries looking for the "lost coins."

Looking for Intercessors.

God is looking for men, women and children who will set their desires aside and pray for the laborers in the harvest

fields. (Matt. 6:6; Lk.10:2) God is looking for intercessors who will pray for the the lost. God is looking for the intercessors who will pray for the peoples of the earth who have not had the opportunity to hear the Good News.

There are many people—hidden in villages, hidden in cities—with no access to the gospel. God is looking for people who will be His intercessors—who will love the hidden people as He loves them. As the Father longs to be joined with his children, the intercessor must also learn to long for all of God's children to come into the light (Matt. 16:19)

The hope of the lost lies only in the gospel. All believers are called to intercede on behalf of the lost. As intercessors, we hold the key to freedom in our hand as we "carry" lost people with us to the throne room of God.

But the hour is approaching and may already be here, when intercessors alone or in small groups pray for that special believer—the believer who will have the privilege of sharing the Good News of the gospel with the last individual who will come to Christ. As intercessors pray for the children in the Sunday School classes, the child who will have the privilege of carrying the light of the gospel may be sitting in class, learning about unreached peoples. As intercessors pray for young people at the local high school, they may be praying for classmates while walking the halls of their school. As intercessors pray for seminary students, God may very well be speaking to the young Christian about launching out to a faraway mission field where the gospel has not yet been proclaimed. As intercessors pray daily for a business man in the city, the Holy Spirit may be talking to him about financing a Bible translation project or a short-term mission trip to a community that does not know the name of Jesus. As intercessors pray for the family down the street, that the family may be counseling with their pastor about moving to a distant land and

working within a tribe that has recently expressed an interest in receiving the Good News.

Somewhere on this planet, God is putting together a team of very special people who will search for the lost coins. Even as the woman in the parable, they will work together, with God's help and search diligently for that last people group. God is looking for missionaries to bring them to salvation in Christ. He is looking for the sending agencies, and looking for persons who are called to finance the task. God is looking for intercessors to support them.

Conclusion

Are you called to be a part of the team? As an intercessor, you may have the privilege of being the prayer supporter in search of that lost people group. We must all pray and work with all intensity! We must all work diligently like the woman searching for the lost coin. We must pray for the one who will carry the lamp to that last people group. Can you imagine the rejoicing there will be in heaven as that last people group comes to the foot of the cross in repentance? Can you imagine how the angels will sing and how the saints watching from above will rejoice? (Matt. 9:37-38)

Pray for the laborers whom God has brought to harvest the fields! Pray for the new laborers that are being added daily to the work of finding the lost coins. Pray that the unreached of the world may all be reached soon for God's glory.

Endnote

1. Wright, Fred H., *Manners & Customs of Bible Lands*, 1953, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, pp.127-129

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