

# 1 - There's Got to be More

## Luke 15:11-16

Have you ever been lost?

It used to be easy to get lost, before GPS was on everybody's phone. Back in the days when you had to depend on other people's directions to find their house. Back when you had to call AAA to plan out your trip. (I remember my dad doing that.) Basically how good the people were at giving you directions determined whether or not you made it to their place or the destination you were seeking.

I was on a trip with a guy named DJ Maxey going to speak at a youth retreat. This particular retreat was at a camp in Pennsylvania called Deep Valley located near Slippery Rock, PA. I'm sure if you could find it, you'd slip on it. We were driving, and this is pre-cell phone days (yes students, I'm an old man to remember those days). We could not find the place, and since we were running out of time before the retreat was to begin, we stopped at this Dairy Queen and went inside to ask for directions. The manager started telling us directions and he ended with this: "If you end up in the river, you've gone too far because the bridge is out."

But now you have to work to get lost... of course, it can still happen. Construction or new roads open up and Siri is lost. Of course, she's always encouraging you to turn around.

Each one of us is on a journey in life towards God. Yet, often our deeply felt longings for love, purpose and our search for answers to life's difficult questions go unanswered in this life. These unmet longings can cause us to drift away from our Creator and away from being the person He created us to be.

If you are here this morning, it is likely you believe in God, but maybe you don't feel connected to Him. Or maybe you wish you could know God, but feel that knowing God is for someone else, someone who has their life all together.

Maybe you sense a distance between where you are and where you want to be spiritually?

Not only is the longing for God a universal experience, but there's also a universal pattern for what a journey in God's direction looks like. Through 5 personal awakenings, you can find your way back to God.

So for the next few weeks here at Restoration, we're going to talk about these 5 awakenings:

- There's got to be more!
- I wish I could start over.
- I can't do this on my own.
- God loves me after all.
- Now this is living!

Here's what I have become convinced of... These awakenings come from God! God has a way of using circumstances in our life to make us aware of our deepest needs. The needs we have

to be loved and find purpose and meaning in life. God awakens us with these longings because He wants to use them to bring us back to Him.

Ultimately God leaves the decision up to us. So these longings we have will either draw us to Him or they will push us away. The choice is yours.

Today I want to focus in on the first awakening:

## **There's got to be more!**

I'm confident that everyone in this room at some point has been disappointed in life. You've waited for something, you longed for fulfillment, you worked harder than you've ever worked before to grab on to this offer of bliss and satisfaction. Only to receive it and think: "This is it?"

I finally bought the car I dreamed of... there's got to be more.  
I finally built my dream home... there's got to be more.  
I finally got married... there's got to be more.  
I finally had kids... there's got to be more.  
I finally get to hear Wade Allen preach... there's got to be more.

We've all been there.

Maybe you don't have a dramatic story, but you've felt an emptiness in life.  
You know what it's like to have longings go unfulfilled.  
You know what it's like to end up in a place you never intended to be.  
And maybe even in this moment you find yourself thinking, "There's got to be more."

That feeling, "There's got to be more," awakens in us longings that lie deep within each of our souls. These longings are so universal that they show up almost everywhere...  
...in the stories we write...  
...in the art we create...  
...and in the songs that we sing.

Let me prove my point. I'm going to play a few songs that are about are about these longings; but I'm going to need you to help me out. The goal is to see if you know the words to the songs. So if you know the words, start singing the song. We will play a few seconds of the song and then we'll stop the music and you keep singing to fill in the blank.

The goal isn't to sing the best, the goal is to sing loud. Be proud you know the song. As far as I know, Adele isn't here this morning, so no one needs to worry about sounding bad. Just sing loud if you know the words.

PLAY: "YMCA CLIP"

PLAY: "I Want it That Way"

PLAY: "Looking for Love...In All The Wrong Places..."

Isn't it amazing how even the songs we listen to point to our longings in this life? But this is nothing new. People living in every culture and every century have these God given longings deep in our souls. But the good news is these longings lead us to the awakenings that help us find our way back to God.

One of the most famous stories in the Bible reveals these 5 awakenings to us. It's the story Jesus told in Luke 15 about the prodigal son. Look with me at Luke 15:11...

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

This man has a son who wants out of the house. He wants his inheritance so he can leave.

But in the context of a first-century Middle Eastern culture, a son's asking for his inheritance early was one of the worst insults a father could receive. A son in Jesus' day was not only expected to wait until his father died before he would receive his inheritance, but he was also expected to take care of his father in his old age. So this son asking for his inheritance early was like saying, "Look, Dad, I don't really care if you live or die anymore. I just know there's something more, and I want it now." This was a huge slap in the face!

Now, before we all cast this son aside as ungrateful and selfish, is it possible that he just said out loud what most of us feel? Don't we sometimes feel like life isn't bringing us what we hoped for or what we wanted or even what we feel like we deserve?

Of course we do.

What I'm about to say next may surprise you:

## **Thinking and feeling that you want something more is what you *should* feel.**

This doesn't mean everything you want is good for you! If I gave my 2 year old daughter Lilly everything she wanted, Amanda would kill me with the scissors Lilly ran with.

Thinking and feeling that you want something more is what you should feel. God has created us with deep longings in this life.

We have a deep...

## **Longing For Love**

I read this week that a man named Glynn Wolfe holds the record for the most number of marriages in the United States. I thought it might have been a Kardashian, but it's actually a man named Glynn Wolfe. Guess how many marriages he's had?

29 marriages!!!

His longest marriage lasted seven years.  
His shortest marriage was nineteen days.  
And just to give the story another twist... he was a Baptist minister!

But what I want to know is why didn't Glynn Wolfe stop after his fourth or twenty-fourth attempt at marriage?

Why did he keep trying?  
And why do most of us keep trying?

After all, relationships are hard. We get dumped. We get hurt. Yet we still long for love.

And why, if one friend stabs you in the back, do you find yourself reaching out and risking friendship again?

We are all looking for love. Inside of all of us is a longing to be loved!

We also long for...

## **Longing for Purpose**

Think back to when you were a kid... What did you want to be when you grew up?  
A doctor? A teacher? Maybe a fireman? An astronaut?

I wanted to be a sports broadcaster... still do! lol

Now ask yourself: Why in the world were you dreaming about having any kind of job or profession at all?

You didn't need a job at that age.  
You didn't have any bills to pay.  
You were still learning the alphabet and how to spell your name!  
Why would you even think about what you wanted to be when you grew up?

Because you already had a desire inside of you for purpose. You wanted to accomplish something in this world!

We long for love. We long for purpose. And we also...

## **Longing for Meaning**

We need answers to the big "Why?" questions. I think every one of us has had enough pain in our lives that at some point we ask, "Why?"

"Why, God, if you are so good, did you allow this to happen?"  
"What is the point of life?" "Why am I here?"  
"Why am I in so much pain?"

If suffering is causing you to question God, think on this:

There is a reason why suffering feels not just painful, but also wrong and unfair.

There is a reason why you feel like your life and the world aren't the way they are supposed to be.

God gave you those feelings. God feels the same way! Your desire to see wrongs righted and suffering come to an end is put in you by God.

Understand, the longing for love, the longing for purpose, and the longing for answers to the big "Why" questions are longings we all experience. We are hard-wired with these longings. So, please understand this - the problem isn't that we have these longings or desires. The problem is that we seek to fulfill them on our own. The problem is we act just like the prodigal son and try to satisfy these longings and answer these questions without God.

Here is the good news this morning:

## **Awakening to these longings and to the truth of where they can be satisfied, marks the beginning of our journey back to God.**

The son in Jesus's story was like so many of us. He was convinced he had to leave his father to find answers and fulfill his longings.

So after getting his inheritance, Jesus said this in verse 13, "[13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living."](#) (Luke 15:13)

The story doesn't give us many details as to what actually occurred in this distant country. It simply tells us, "The younger son...squandered his wealth in wild living."

We're left to imagine what "wild living" might have looked like in Jesus's day. If the story were told today, the son could have ventured off to Vegas or some exotic place in search of something more. I can imagine it was a journey that included parties with binge drinking into all hours of the night and women who were willing to satisfy every desire.

You see, it didn't take long for the son in this story to blow his inheritance, and very quickly his adventure turned sour. Check out what happens next after wasting his money...

[14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.](#)

His situation went from bad to worse.

His longing for love wasn't satisfied in other women.

His longing for purpose wasn't found in partying.

His journey left him asking all kinds of "Why?" questions:

“Why didn’t this turn out like I thought it would?”

“Why am I so lonely, broke, and empty?”

“Why did I end up in a place like this?”

Sound familiar? Feel familiar? The story of the lost son is each of our stories.

Some more or less dramatic.

Some more or less painful.

And the reason Jesus told this story is to help each of us find our way home – back to God. So this brings us to life’s most important question. It’s a question you will have to answer over and over again. And here it is:

**Where will you go to satisfy these God-given longings?**

**Will that draw you to close to God or away from God?**

No matter where you are in your journey, these questions are relevant.

These longings came from God, and they will either draw us to Him or they will push us away.

Imagine though, if God fulfilled your longing for love, purpose and meaning?

Imagine what would it be like to not have to run after love anymore?

Imagine what would it feel like to not have to search for purpose or look for meaning?

Can you even begin to imagine what it might feel like to experience longing fulfilled?

My prayer is that everyone one of us will let those longings lead us back to God.

I wanted to share Laura’s story with you this morning before we close...

(Play Laura’s video)

## **COMMUNION**

You long for love... you long for purpose and meaning. And just like Laura, in God you can find all of those longings satisfied. God can even bring meaning and purpose to our suffering. He can bring good even from bad and you were created to be loved by Him.

We know this is true because of the cross of Jesus.

God used death to bring us life!

Let’s take time to remember and celebrate Jesus’ victory over death in a time of communion.

Let’s pray...

(Video after prayer)

## INVITATION

Blaise Pascal was a 17th century mathematician and considered to have one of the greatest intellects in the history of Western civilization. He grew up knowing about God but not following Him.

Then he had a profound middle of the night experience in which he had a change of heart. He not only found God but God ignited a passion in him to help others find their way back to God. Pascal began to challenge his fellow intellectuals to wager on God. He would dare them to step into belief and see if it didn't change their lives. He said, "Let us weigh the gain and the loss of wagering that God is. If he is you gain it all and if he has not you have lost nothing."

As we begin this series FYWBTG... I want to ask everyone to accept a variation of Pascal's wager. I want to challenge us for the next 30 days to pray a simple prayer every day.

**“God, awaken in me the ability to see that You are what's missing from my life.”**

Every time we sense a deep longing, pray this prayer. God help me remember and see you are the One to satisfy my needs.

Let me ask you again: Where will you go to fill these longings that each of us have? These longings came from God, and they will either draw us to Him or they will push us away.

Imagine though, if God fulfilled your longing for love, purpose and meaning?

He can and He will... if you choose.