

The Importance Of What Is Lost

Everyone knows the way in which the inability to lay hands on some trivial article - it might be a safety-pin or a half-consumed pencil - can bring our day to a complete standstill. *I know it was here. I'm sure I put it down ten minutes ago. How can it be gone?*

We get very impatient when we lose things, and I think it is because we sense in small losses the fact that *we are lost* ourselves. We try to evade recognising this by amassing things and keeping them to ourselves; all greed is an attempt to convince ourselves that we are rich. The fact that greed possesses us like a cancer, growing always larger with an agenda of its own, until it robs us of our real life, doesn't dawn on us till too late. By then we have nothing left to invest, nothing left to be generous with.

It is wisdom for us if we can acknowledge that (in our Lord's words) *we are not made safe by what we possess, even if we seem to have more than enough*. He also spoke of the amassing of *real treasure*, which cannot be eaten away or lost on the stock-market. It's consoling to know that we're not totally off-beam in wanting to be safe, in longing to be rich. All we need is for that longing to be properly aimed, for our hearts to be set where true treasure can be found.

This is the secret of happiness, the true directing of our hearts; this is the elusive mystery which is just off our sight-line, the precious thing we have lost, and which will not let us rest until we have found it.

Today we are given images of God which perfectly match our restless search. God is the shepherd who cannot rest whilst we are *lost*, the woman whose mind is fixed on the one *lost* coin. When we meet God, it may be at the very end of our tether, on the very edge of our survival, in the depths of our *lostness*, it will be with one heart; and it will be an exultant meeting, a perfect consummation, as we lay hold on the great treasure that has always eluded us, and he lays hold on us who were lost: and there will be joy amongst all the angels.

Father, we are far from you. Come to us with your power, and gather us to yourself.