

**Pentecost 17 (24 Ordinary Sunday) Year C**  
**11 September 2016**

**Readings:** *Exodus 32:7-14, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Luke 15:1-10, Psalm 51:1-10*

**Theme:** *God's forgiveness and Mercy*

"Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance"

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit  
Amen.

My dear friends the above quotation from the Gospel we have read this morning clearly states clearly the message for us today. Today is about God actively seeking us and welcoming us back into his fold. Today is about coming back to God even if we have strayed. The fact that there is joy over one sinner who repents does not mean that God intends that we stray.

To sin is to stray away from God: Could any of us say that have not strayed? But Jesus the good shepherd comes looking for us and is overjoyed when he finds us.

All the readings we have this morning seem to confirm this.

In the first reading, Moses intercedes for the people because they had done what is unacceptable in his sight. After safely returning to the Promised Land, the people of Israel started worshipping golden calf at the foot of the very mountain where they had made a covenant with God. Here in justice, God announced a crushing punishment; but at the same time in his mercy, he offered them time to repent and return to him. **Yes, God is even present even with those who are breaking their exclusive relationship with him, at their baptism. Angry yes, but still merciful, offering them time to return.**

In the second reading, Paul in his first letter to Timothy, Paul gives thanks to the Lord for all he has done for him. He reflects on his personal history. He describes himself before his conversion as a blasphemer, a persecutor and a man of violence, one who was out to make sure that Christianity was extinguished. He was like the sinful son in the parable of the Gospel. He was delivered from all these, not by Moses pleading as he did for the people of God on Mount Sinai but by Christ Jesus who came to the world to save sinners. In the Gospel, through parables Jesus justifies his concern for sinners. For the Pharisees, this would have been unthinkable. The demand placed on would be believers did not put off the crowd from coming to listen to him.

The emphasis on the Gospel is on the graciousness of God who is so much in love with us that he seeks out the lost and the forgotten. We are all precious in the eyes of God and every bit of lives he wants to live praising him.

Today, many of us have gone astray and are morally and spiritually confused than we care to realise. This is as a result of living aimless lives, doing our own things and indulging into various forms of escapism.

Jesus understands God. He is like the shepherd looking for the sheep. He is like the woman looking for her coin. God is ever willing to come to help without pre-conditions. Today, let us come back to him, he will receive us with an open arm.

In the name.....