



*The Journey*  
Week of 04.11.10

## **The Big Miss**

By Terrilynn Obrock

When I was 4 years old, my Father was in the Army. He was transferred to Germany and did not take my Mother and me with him. He was only supposed to be gone for 18 months, but ended up being gone for three years. When he came back home, he had a new wife and a new baby daughter. That has been close to 50 years ago and I still find myself wondering if he ever loved me. I have had a hard time coming to terms with the feeling of being replaced.

I can read the Bible and listen to others talk about the love our heavenly father has for each of us. But, I often find it hard to relate to the idea of a father's love. I don't know what that feels like. I don't know what that looks like.

I googled statistics on absent fathers and I came up with over 300,000 hits. Study after study shows that when the biological father is absent, the child suffers. There is something about a father's love and attention that is crucial to a child growing up to be a healthy adult.

So where can these children/adults find an example of a father's love? How can they know for sure that their heavenly father loves them when they have nothing to compare it to? That's where we come into the picture, for we are our brother's keeper.

Jesus repeated the theme of going out to find the lost over and over again in the scriptures. We should be opening our arms to those who do not know the father's love and showing them by our example what it is like to be unconditionally loved. Steven Curtis Chapman in his song "Live Out Loud" said it best.

"Think about this  
If we really have been given the gift of life that will never end  
And if we have been filled with living hope, we're gonna overflow  
And if God's love is burning in our hearts, we're gonna glow  
There's just no way to keep it in"

Do you overflow with the love of our heavenly father? Do you rejoice when a lost soul is reclaimed for the kingdom of God? Or are you the elder son in the story of the prodigal son – jealous at the attention being paid to the lost soul who has returned?

*"Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away."*

~ Dinah Craik

**Three Important Action Steps** related to this series: we're hoping that All Heartlanders will roll up their sleeves with us at our annual "What If The Church" Serve Day on Saturday, May 1st!

1. You must sign up and register to serve before April 28th and may do so by clicking [here](#). There's a variety of locations, projects, and skill levels for you (*and your family*) to choose from. So, if you can pick up a rake, you can serve. It will be a blast!

2. To stretch the dollars that every church has committed towards the Serve Day, we are also hoping for both cash and material donations. To make a cash donation, click [here](#) and be sure to read the instructions before taking the next step. When you get to step 2 on "Parish Pay" be sure to enter your donation in the "What If The Church" box. To donate materials for the sites, email [Tom Page](#).

3. We still need leaders for various projects. Please email [Cynthia](#) here to step up b/c we need ya!

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**(You are encouraged to use the SOAP – Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer Method for a guide. Click [here](#) for an example SOAP journal entry. Page numbers refer to "The Story of God" Bible available for free at the Welcome Center in our atrium.)**

## **monday, 04.12.10**

Read: [Genesis 4](#) (pg. 3)

## **tuesday, 04.13.10**

Read: [Luke 15](#) (pg. 716)

## **wednesday, 04.14.10**

Read: [Luke 14:15-24](#) (pg. 715)

## **thursday, 04.15.10**

Read: [Matthew 23](#) (pg. 677)

## **friday, 04.16.10**

Read: [Matthew 25](#) (pg. 678)

**If you don't already receive weekly email notification about The Journey, click [here](#) to sign up.**

**grow** (resources to help you in your study)

- **Sunday's Sermon:** Click [here](#) for podcast, or here for [video](#)
- **films:** to watch all of HCC'S "Rescue" films, click [here](#)
- book: [The Prodigal God](#), by Timothy Keller
- book: [Return of the Prodigal Son](#) by Henri Nouwen

**go** (action steps)

- **SERVE:** go to [www.whatifthechurch.net](http://www.whatifthechurch.net) to register and join us!
- **prayer?** Please send us an email by clicking [here](#)
- **care?** Do you need to talk with someone? Please call us at 913.341.5820 ext. 330
- **go**—Sign up to serve: email Lisa Zulke by clicking [here](#)
- **grow**—Join a small group, a 1:1 spiritual mentorship, or find about the many other [ways to grow](#)
- **give**—click [here](#) to make an online gift to Heartland and learn how you can set up recurring gifts

Small Group/ 1:1 Question Samplers:

1. Per Sunday's sermon, what more have you learned about Jesus' "Prodigal Son" story?
2. Per Matthew 23, make a list of all the ways Jesus calls out the "Big Brother Spirit" in the Pharisees.
3. Where does the "Big Brother" spirit creep up in you?
4. Consequently, what can often be your big miss?
5. How does the elder brother's responsibility to chase after his lost brother tie to our mission of "building a church for the unchurched"?