

“Finders weepers, losers keepers.” Am I saying that right? Maybe it’s “finders keepers, losers weepers.” But not according to Jesus. “*Whoever finds his life will lose it,*” He says, “*and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*” Finders weepers, losers keepers.

Have you found your life? There is a lot of advice out there on how to find yourself. From meditating, to spending more time out in nature, getting in touch with your feelings, even making a list of everything you like about yourself. And perhaps some of this advice can help a person who has lost his way in life, who has a hard time fitting into society.

More important, however, much more important than fitting into society is how we fit into God. More specifically, into Jesus Christ.

We fit into society through relationships. Our relationships with spouse, family, friends, neighbors. Does this work with God? Do you have a relationship with Him? If so, is it a good relationship, or is it broken, maybe even beyond repair?

Jesus, here in our text, tells us that to fit into God we must lose ourself. We must lose our life for His sake. This is not like losing your car keys or losing a game of Monopoly. Rather, it means living a life of repentance. This is how you fit into God. Through repentance and forgiveness. Dying to sin on a daily basis and being raised to life with Christ.

Some of you know that I’m talking about baptism. This is how you fit into God. Jesus fit you in by grafting you into Himself in Holy Baptism.

A lot of people who talk about finding themselves are really saying that they want to be independent, free to be themselves. They see themselves as the center of the universe. They want control of their own life. Their goal is to be happy, and perhaps also to make others happy.

It has been said that around the age of fifty is when most people try to find themselves. Maybe this explains the so-called “mid-life crisis.”

If this is you, if you are trying to find yourself, stop! Stop searching. You’ve already been found. Jesus found you in your baptism. And if you succeed in finding your life, you will lose it He says. If you find your life apart from the life you have with Christ in your baptism, it will be a life that leads you away from Jesus into death.

You are not the center of the universe. Jesus is. If your life revolves around you, then you have booted Jesus out of your life. And who of us has never done that? Who of us, on a daily basis, truly lives with Jesus at the very center of our life? None of us. No wonder we all need to repent on a daily basis.

Now sometimes people try to find themselves through their relationships with others. With spouse, family, friends. And if these relationships break, they become lost and don’t know who they are anymore.

But you will never find yourself through others, even through your loved ones. They are not the center of your life. They are, most certainly, blessings from God, and we value them as blessings. But when we make them the center of our life, they become our gods, and we will lose in the end. *“Whoever loves (these) more than Me,”* says Jesus, *“is not worthy of Me.”*

It is not for you and me to find ourselves, to find our life through meditating, through deep searching, or through our relationships. Your life is with Christ. In Him, writes the apostle, *“we live, and move, and have our being.”* *“The life I live,”* he says, *“I live by faith in the Son of God.”* *“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”*

Call this a relationship if you want. But it’s a relationship like no other. Because what you have with Jesus cannot be broken as with other relationships. It is never beyond repair. Even if you have booted Jesus completely out of your life, you are and remain His baptized child. Nothing can change that. And if you have made your spouse or your child the center of your life, rather than Jesus, your loving Savior calls to you to return to your baptism, to the life you have there with Him.

This is how you will find your life: by returning daily to your baptism, to the life you have in Christ which has always been yours, and which no one can take from you.

Here in our text, we hear Jesus talk about being worthy of Him. Yet He does not tell us how to be worthy of Him. All He says is that we are *“not worthy of (Him).”* Three times He says this. So again, stop searching. Stop looking for a way to be worthy of Jesus. You can’t find it. It is not within your grasp or mine. All you can do is to lose your life for His sake.

Repent of your sins. Repent of your failed efforts to find yourself. Repent of your failed attempts to make yourself worthy of Jesus. When you lose your life in this way, for Jesus’ sake, He returns you to the life you have with Him in your baptism. A new life. A life restored and empowered by the Holy Spirit. A life of joy and fulfillment. A life that is worthy of Him, not because you are a better person, but because you are forgiven. Forgiven of all your sins. Forgiven of all your failed efforts to find yourself. Forgiven of all your failed attempts to make yourself worthy.

You are worthy of Jesus for one reason – because His blood, shed on the cross of Calvary, covers you, forgives you, and this you believe by the grace of God.

So yes, finders are weepers, and losers are keepers. Losing yourself in Christ is to be found by Him. He is your life now and forever. Amen.