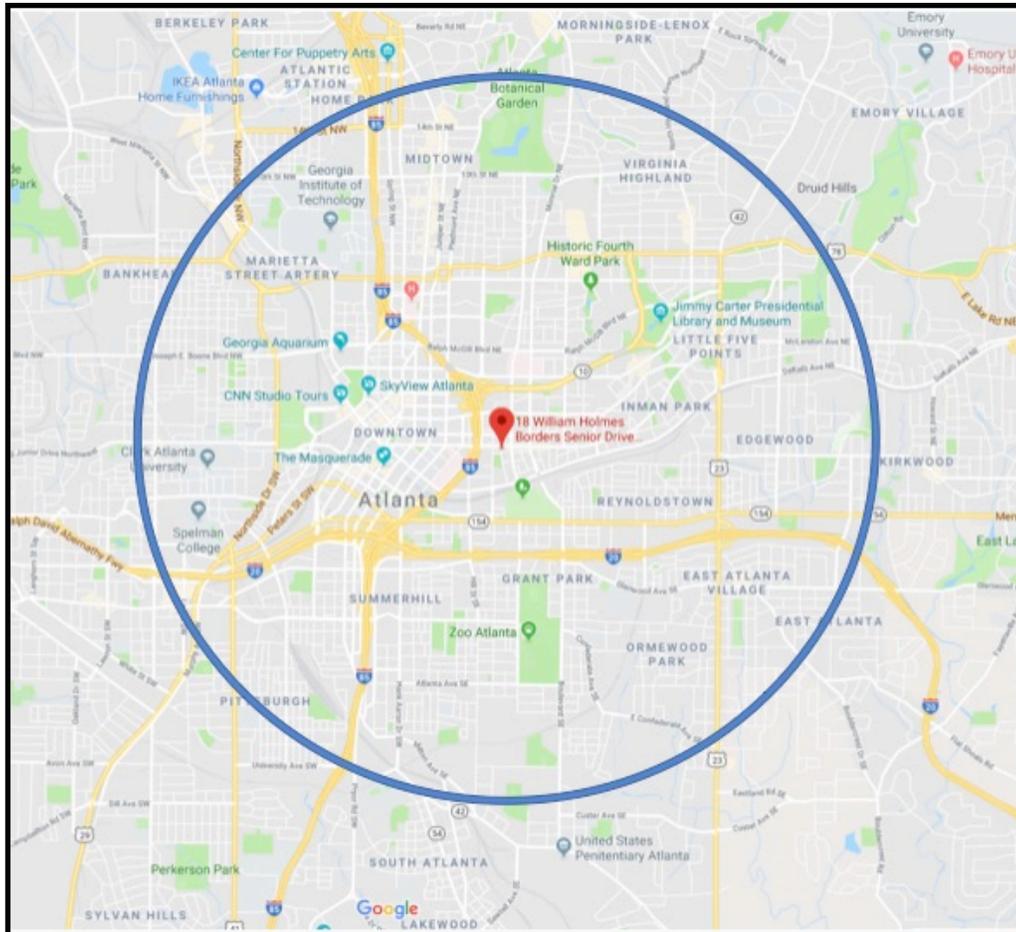


# Wednesday with the Word

*Wheat Street Baptist Church*

Rev. Ralph Basui Watkins  
Servant Pastor / Teacher

A Heart for the Lost: The Cost for the Lost  
Luke 14 - 16 - Our Weekly Reading



- 176,651 people live within three miles of Wheat Street
- The top individual segment is Struggling Black Families 21.6%
- African American 38.4%
- Largest age group Millennials (17 to 36) 73,681 or 47.1%
- The area is extremely non-traditional due to the below average presence of married persons and two-parent families

What ministries do we have in our church that specifically reaches out to and supports this population?

Do we want to change?

What does it mean to care for those who are in our community

What does it mean to be “a church in the heart of Atlanta with Atlanta in our heart”?

### **Luke 14:25-27 - The Price of Being a Disciple: Are You Willing to Pay the Price**

**25** Large crowds were walking along with Jesus, when he turned and said:

**26** You cannot be my disciple, unless you love me more than you love your father and mother, your wife and children, and your brothers and sisters. You cannot come with me unless you love me more than you love your own life.

**27** You cannot be my disciple unless you carry (or pick up) your own cross and come with me.

Who do you need to cut off or stand up to, to be the disciple Jesus wants you to be?

How much do you love the Lord?

What is a cross versus a crop?

What is your cross?

What are the signs in your life that you are living Luke 14:25-27?

### **Luke 14:28-33 - The Cost of Discipleship**

**28** Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. What is the first thing you will do? Won't you sit down and figure out how much it will cost and if you have enough money to pay for it? **29** Otherwise, you will start building the tower, but not be able to finish. Then everyone who sees what is happening will laugh at you. **30** They will say, “You started building, but could not finish the job.”

**31** What will a king do if he has only ten thousand soldiers to defend himself against a king who is about to attack him with twenty thousand soldiers? Before he goes out to battle, won't he first sit down and decide if he can win? **32** If he thinks he won't be able to defend himself, he will send messengers and ask for

peace while the other king is still a long way off. **33** So then, you cannot be my disciple unless you give away everything you own.

The passage really isn't about winning or losing but rather it is about are we willing to do what we need to do to mature disciples of Jesus Christ. We will have to be willing to give it all away, our will, our life style, our desires, our fleshly wants....are we willing to be mature disciples of Jesus Christ who is willing to give it all away?

We have made discipleship cheap in churches. We ask people to show up, give as they feel or can, maybe serve in a ministry and if it is not too much to ask, attend Bible Study or Sunday School. Most church folk and "church leaders" don't even do this, yet they call themselves, Christians, or disciples of Jesus Christ. The church has failed us by not holding us accountable. The church has failed us by telling us just enough is enough. We have been misled. The cost of discipleship is to submit your will to God's will. The cost of discipleship is to take Jesus at his word and be like Jesus. The more you meditate on the life of Jesus the more your life should reflect the life of Jesus. The church has failed us by selling us cheap discipleship and as a result we have not experienced the fullness of God. Our faith has not flourished. We have been given a faith on life support instead a faith that is life giving. We have to decide if we want a faith filled life, that reflects faithfulness of God so that we flourish in God or will we continue down the road that has left so many churches and Christians wanting? The result of dying churches filled with people of faith who have not been matured in Christ so that they can experience the fullness of Christ.

"We exist to develop mature disciple of Jesus Christ....."

### **Luke 15:1-7 - Disciples are Friendly with Sinners: They Go and Make a Difference**

Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. **2** So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them."

Who is in the group and what are they doing?

Are you in this group?

**3** Then Jesus told them this story:

**4** If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? **5** And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder **6** and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbors and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep."

**7** Jesus said, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

Do we care enough to leave the church to be the church?  
We are called to go get the one!

Who is the one we are called to go and get?

We are called to develop ministry with the one, for the one so that we will bring ninety-nine more.

### **Luke 15:8-10**

**8** Jesus told the people another story:

What will a woman do if she has ten silver coins and loses one of them? Won't she light a lamp, sweep the floor, and look carefully until she finds it? **9** Then she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found the coin I lost."

**10** Jesus said, "In the same way God's angels are happy when even one person turns to him."

What is our light?

Who have we lost?

Where is our floor?

Are we looking?

What does it look like to look?

Who in your daily walk do you come by that needs the Lord?

How many friends and strangers do you invite to the Lord or even to church or a church experience on a weekly basis?

82% of unchurched / de-churched people are at least “somewhat likely” to attend a church sponsored experience if they are invited.

Yet only 21% of active church attenders invite anyone to a church sponsored experience in a given year....and only 2% of Christians invite unchurched person to attend worship with them.

### **Luke 15:11-32**

**11** Jesus also told them another story:

Once a man had two sons. **12** The younger son said to his father, “Give me my share of the property.” So the father divided his property between his two sons.

What did the father do?

Who got their share of the property?

Why did the father divide the property?

**13** Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. **14** He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

What did the younger son do?

Why did he do this?

How would you feel if this was your son?

**15** He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. **16** He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

What are the results of doing it your way?

Why would we try to do things our way instead of God’s way?

Have you ever done anything like the younger brother?

**17** Finally, he came to his senses and said, “My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! **18** I will go to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. **19** I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.’”

This is repentance. What do you need to repent from / turn from?

Are there things in your life that are pushing you away from the will of God in your life?

Are there people you need to turn from before they turn you around?

**20** The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.

**21** The son said, “Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.”

**22** But his father said to the servants, “Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. **23** Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. **24** This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.” And they began to celebrate.

Why did the father respond this way?

Why didn’t he chastise the boy?

Why didn’t he make the boy pay for what he had done?

Why did he make it so easy?

What does the father’s action say about God and how God’s people should receive those who come to God, or return to God?

**25** The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants over and asked, "What's going on here?"

**27** The servant answered, "Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf." **28** The older brother got so angry that he would not even go into the house.

His father came out and begged him to go in. **29** But he said to his father, "For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends." **30** This other son of yours wasted your money on prostitutes. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast."

**31** His father replied, "My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found."

Do we really want the lost to return?

Do we really want to have a party for those who come?

Do we really want to make a seat for them at the head of the table?

Are we really willing to change and welcome what is coming when we who have been here have never had a party thrown for us?

Are we excited about the 1,500 souls that are going to be saved via God's power through Wheat Street and are we ready to fund the party that they deserve?