

22nd June 2021

Found

“Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep that was lost.”

Bible, Luke 15:6

The parables of Jesus about the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son are among His most powerful. These stories focus on something or someone who was lost, and the key message is that, once they have been found, there is much rejoicing. But what if being “found” is to do with you, and not something or someone else? Do we not talk sometimes about “finding ourselves”? Shouldn’t there be rejoicing when that happens too?

Francis Bacon was a seventeenth century English philosopher, statesman, lawyer, jurist, author and pioneer of scientific method. He’s been called the creator of empiricism, a theory that states that knowledge comes primarily from sensory experience. In his scientific explorations, his style was to have a planned procedure, a clear methodology, for interpreting what he was looking for and what he found. Here was a man who no longer worked with vague and unproven ideas.

Take, for example, the idea of “alchemy”, the attempt to create gold from base metals. Have your investigations if you like, he suggested, fruitless though they may be. But in your explorations, keep your eyes open for new discoveries you never even considered. In his scientific treatise *De Augmentis Scientiarum* of 1623, he wrote:

Alchemy may be compared to the man who told his sons that he had left them gold, buried somewhere in his vineyard; while they by digging found no gold, but by turning up the mould about the roots of the vines procured a plentiful vintage. So the search and endeavours to make gold have brought many useful inventions to light.

The search for meaning, purpose and fulfilment in oneself can lead to discoveries that are revelatory, even though they may be quite different from what we expected. But is it not these discoveries – unexpected though they may be – that is our cause for rejoicing? After all, finding what we know we’ve lost is one thing. But discovering something even greater that we didn’t expect to find in the first place, is something else altogether.

A prayer for today

I looked, and I found myself. I found myself, and I discovered peace. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>