

FOR ONE

by Paula Leanues

He starts out running, knowing it will be a struggle to arrive at his destination. But he knows he must go.

Along the way, he sees people who once knew him, but they don't seem to recognize him now. His heart is sad for this, but he knows he must keep running.

The woods are thick and dark, but he conquers every inch of them. He has light to get him through, and he has a goal.

He sails over park benches; he finds himself in a hailstorm; he weaves himself in and out of cars in traffic jams.

"I have to get there. I will get there in time. I live to get there."

More faces in a crowd, some that flash with recognition of him, some that do not. Some see his pace, his drive, perhaps even sense something valiant in him – but they yell obscenities at him anyway.

"Crazy! Lunatic! Who do you think you are?"

He keeps running. Hills, farms, city streets, parks, parking lots, wherever he must go to get there.

He stops. He arrives. He is not even out of breath.

There is the person he came for, sitting alone on a sidewalk. He takes one gentle step forward.

"I heard you were lost," he says to the person.

"I am," the person says, sadly. "I've given you a lot of trouble. Why do you come for me?"

Taking another step closer, he smiles sweetly and says, "My Father so loved you that He sent Me."

A light of hope flashes across the person. "Lord - will you have me?" the person asks. "If I give all of myself to You, will You have me? If I repent right now, will You have me?"

Without a thought, and with the voice of Love, He responds, "I have you. I want you. I love you. I came for you. You are clean and you are Mine. Receive My righteousness."

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his

friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

- Luke 15:4-7