

LOST THINGS

The Parables of Luke 15

Whose story best reveals the main point of the parable of the Prodigal Son? (circle one)

* The Younger Son

* The Father

* The Older Son

In Luke 15, we see a trilogy of parables. They are linked together. In fact, the context of the chapter leads us to understand that each parable is used to *make the same point!*

A Lost Sheep.

A Lost Coin.

A Lost Son.

Let's explore the parables!

The Lost Sheep

The other day I saw a Mom panicking ... she had lost her child. It made me think of times when we've "lost" our kids. (Abby at Disney)

- the progression: 1. You search 2. You enlist family 3. You start yelling his / her name
4. You enlist strangers 5. You do whatever it takes!
- during this experience, URGENCY replaces PROPRIETY!!

(1) The Shepherd SOUGHT AFTER the Sheep!

- > An amazing thought for the Jewish hearers: that the RIGHTEOUS would seek out the SINNER!
 - * Israel had FAILED at shepherding (Ezek. 34:1-16)
 - * To a Jew, the onus was on the sinner to repent and come to God – they couldn't imagine God coming to them!
 - * Isaiah 53:6 – the Lost Sheep represents SINNERS
- About Lost Sheep: They can't find their OWN WAY HOME

"Sheep are not generally independent thinkers. Their natural inclination is to stay together in flocks. If one got lost, it was usually owing to the animal's sheer stupidity or bumbling clumsiness. Perhaps the lost sheep got itself on a ledge where it couldn't get off or somehow didn't notice when the rest of the flock wandered away.

*Either way, the lost sheep was in mortal danger. A sheep separated from the flock and left to wander by itself in the wilderness **will** die, even with an abundance of food and water all around. It's only a matter of time before the lost sheep would succumb to the stress of being separated from the flock, the threat of predators, or exposure to the elements. Any or all of those could be fatal in short order."*

-- John MacArthur, A Tale of Two Sons

- > Consider the phrase, "come to Christ." How might that phrase inaccurately describe salvation?

(2) The Shepherd puts the Sheep ON HIS SHOULDERS!

- > The picture: NO EFFORT by the sheep. Why? *It can't make the effort*
- > What usually happens when a parent finds that lost child? *Hugs, fussing, hugs, yelling, etc.*
 - Why don't we see that reaction from Jesus?

(3) Everyone REJOICES!

- > Who? Shepherd, friends, neighbors
- > v.7 – WHAT??? Who doesn't need to repent?

* At first, I thought this meant the church (already saved) and that our focus should be only on 'new evangelism' rather than on body ministry. However, I asked the question, "Who doesn't need to repent?"

→ Jesus is using SARCASM! The Pharisees and teachers of the law were SELF-RIGHTEOUS – they didn't recognize their need to repent!

The Lost Coin

This week, a church member came to church to look for some lost asparagus! What usually happens when something valuable is lost in the sanctuary? (*I turn on lights, go through all pews, get on belly, etc.*)

(1) Cultural Gap – how many lost coins do you have lying around in your house? Your car?

-- Can you imagine calling for a celebration when you find one?

-- To "get" this parable we must examine the cultural context!

→ Jesus was almost certainly describing a woman's bridal headdress – it was a custom to place 10 coins within the bridal headdress.

→ Greek, "drachma" – about a day's wage -- certainly valuable, but even more sentimental!

→ It might be like a future bride losing the diamond out of her engagement ring!

(2) Emphases in the Parable

i. The SEARCH! (-- lighting a lamp -- sweeping the house --searching carefully)

> Denotes a frantic / urgent search

ii. They REJOICE! (same as 1st Parable – "in the same way" v.10)

The Lost Son

(1) What was his "sin?"

* "My share of the estate" – 1/3 of the inheritance

> In essence: "I don't want to wait for your death ... give me my inheritance NOW."

-- "I wish you were dead so I can have my inheritance and be on my own."

* Squandered wealth in worldly living

> IMMORALITY – prostitutes (v.30)

> Breaking the LAW OF MOSES – feeding the pigs (pigs were 'unclean')

-- worse than eating pork, he wanted to EAT PIG SLOP!

-- more than just GROSS ... ILLEGAL!

→ These points demonstrate the depth of sin – about as bad as it gets!

(2) His Return

* He CONFESSED his sin! (v.21a)

* He showed HUMILITY! (v.21b)

* His father FORGAVE

> He saw his son "a long way off." (He was looking for him!) Expectation??

> What does that say to those who are praying for lost family members?

(3) The Celebration

* Nature of the celebration: ring, sandals, father's best robe, fatted calf, banquet, music, dancing

-- Beyond a "normal" celebration! (The other son had never experienced such.)

* What don't we see? A WAIT-AND-SEE attitude! Does the salvation STICK??

There are so many beautiful points that are to be made from these parables:

1. *No matter how far we stray, we'll always be WELCOMED HOME!*
2. HUMILITY, not SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS brings Jesus joy!
3. We can't get to Jesus ON OUR OWN – He comes to us!
– even the son tried to earn his way back – the father wouldn't have it!

But what's the MAIN message?

→ To find that we must explore what these three parables have in common!!!

(1) Being lost? (*Yes, for the son. Maybe, for the sheep (dumb), but the coin isn't responsible at all*)

(2) The search? (*Yes, for the sheep. Yes, for the coin. No, for the son. No one goes searching for him*)

(3) The response when what's lost is found? (*This is what they all have in common!*)

→ The glue that links these parables is found in the 1st 3 verses of this chapter!

→ How would you summarize the main point of these parables?

→ How can we apply this point to our lives?

So ... whose story best reveals the main point of the parable of the Prodigal Son? (*circle one*)

* The Younger Son

* The Father

* **The Older Son**

Series Schedule:

- April 14th: Intro – Seed & the Sower
- April 21st: Lost Things (Luke 15)
- April 28th: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25)
- May 5th: Kingdom Parables
- May 12th: What happens at a Wedding
- May 19th: Be Prepared!!
- May 26th: TBA
- June 2nd: TBA
- June 9th: What happens in a Vineyard
- June 16th: VBS (no Adult Bible Study)
- June 23rd: The Shrewd Manager (Luke 16)
- June 30th: Parables of Persistence (Lk. 11, 18)