

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

The Love of God

Luke 15: 1-32

The spiritual leaders of Jesus' day had strong feelings about association with *sinner*s. They felt that any association with tax gatherers and sinners was equivalent to approving of their behavior and treating them as friends, especially sharing meals together. They went so far as to say that one should not associate with a sinner even for the purpose of bringing them closer to the Law. In Luke 15 Jesus sets the record straight on how God feels about the matter.

I. The Value of the Lost Sheep

In this parable, Jesus indicates that the value of the lost sheep is worth leaving the 99 who are safe in the fold and going after the one that is missing.

II. The Desperate Search for the Lost Coin

In this parable Jesus highlights the extent to which God will go to find a lost coin, which again represents one who is missing from the family.

III. The Father's Love and the Two Sons

In this story, which is more of an allegory than a parable, with multiple facets to the drama, Jesus expresses the love of the Father and the reactions of the two sons:

- A. The setting: a sad and stunning blow to a loving father
- B. The spiral from riches to rags and the awakening of the younger son
- C. Homecoming
 - 1. The younger son's resolve
 - 2. The father's yearning and watchful eye
 - 3. Fellowship restored
 - 4. The banquet celebration
- D. The tragedy of the older son, a second prodigal in reality
 - 1. His motivation for service
 - 2. His jealousy over the reception of his younger brother
 - 3. His broken fellowship with the father

IV. The love of God for lost people, demonstrated in the value He places on lost sheep, in the desperation with which He searches them out, and in the joy that is His when, at last, they come home. *For I am convinced that...nothing...will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!* (Rom 8:38-9)

Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." So He told them this parable, saying, "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." And He said, "A man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the distinctive emphases of the manifestation of the Father's Love in each parable?
2. Which of these parables speaks most clearly to you? Why?
3. Discuss your thoughts about the older son. What were his expectations? Why did he have these expectations?
4. What was the attitude of the younger son regarding his father when he left home? How did he feel when he returned? What was his motivation for coming back home?
5. Do you think the father understood why his son had returned? What difference do you think that made for him?
6. Discuss how this study has given you a better perspective of the Father's love for you and for lost people.

NOTES

sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'" **Luke 15: 1-32 NASB**

Paul R. Martin
Senior Pastor
Alliance Bible Church of McHenry, IL