

Luke 15 → Lost & Found

Alive Series

Hey good morning church. So good to have you with us today as we continue our time of worship in the Word. If you have a Bible, I invite you to go ahead and turn to Luke 15 this morning. I'm going to read Luke 15:1-10 from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

READ Luke 15:1-10

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ "What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field^[a] and go after the lost one until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, ⁶ and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' ⁷ I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸ "Or what woman who has ten silver coins, ^{[b][c]} if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!' ¹⁰ I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."

PRAY

MAIN IDEA: Jesus came to seek and to save sinners.

Two incredible parables, and the 3rd parable Jesus gives us in Luke 15 is equally incredible. All through the lens of a bunch of super religious guys, getting mad at Jesus for breaking their rules. But if you've studied and read the Gospels, you know **some of Jesus' hardest words were directed toward the super-religious guys.** They were interested in controlling people, they dealt with fear and power and control.

One of the biggest beefs they had with Jesus was that he healed someone on the Sabbath. **They missed the entire point of the Sabbath,** and these super religious guys, they used the Sabbath (which is a gift to us, by the way) to try and control people. They failed to see it as a gift. So back in Luke 14, when Jesus heals this guy, they start getting mad at him and he turns

the tables on them. Asks them “which one of you wouldn’t help your son, or better yet your ox if they’d fallen in a well on the Sabbath?”

The problem with the Pharisees and the Scribes, or at least one of their major problems, was that **they failed to see people, all people, as God sees people** - being made in the image of God. As valuable. They viewed some groups of people as pawns to be used and controlled, and other groups of people as sinners beyond the possible reach of God’s mercy and grace.

Because, when Jesus healed a person that had a disease, or made a lame person walk, they didn’t marvel at the work of God. They nitpicked Jesus and the person about their rules. In fact, I’d say they didn’t even care about the worshipful heart of the people they were trying to control, so long as they followed all the rules.

Not Jesus though. He came with a message that turned the world upside down. We saw some of it last week in our reading plan, and specifically in Luke 14 in our readings, which connects to Luke 15 today.

In Luke 14 – which connects to Luke 15 – after getting angry that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, Jesus teaches on humility – which is huge because the Pharisee and scribes were arrogant and prideful. And as we’ve said here at RCM, there is no place for pride in the life of a Christian. None. None at all. Then Jesus gives this parable of the Large Banquet – you know this story if you’ve read it before or in our reading plan – that a man giving a party had invited a bunch of people but no one shows up. He tells his servants, go into the streets and bring people in here, poor people, maimed people, blind and lame people. Bring them in. So that the house could be filled.

Because hear me – **Jesus’ invitation is for all people**. And this is the RUB for the super religious guys. They didn’t want Jesus to save “those” people. They couldn’t believe what they were hearing. And neither could the tax collectors and sinners. They probably couldn’t believe what they were hearing. They’d been the outcasts. They couldn’t go to the temple. Everybody knew who they were, and I’m guessing at some point they didn’t really care what people thought about them. No one would want to have anything to do with them. But they were listening to Jesus.

Luke 15:1 says all the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. There was something different about what Jesus was saying. Something they wanted to hear. **But don’t think for a second it was some watered down mumbo jumbo that makes no claim on your life. Not some easy peasy gospel lite type of thing. Jesus is crystal clear – you want to follow me? Turn from your sin, take up your cross (die to self) and follow me.** I will not leave you in your sin. You have to run from your sin and follow me.

Well this made the religious guys even more mad. They couldn’t believe that he would welcome and eat with “sinners”. They would never eat because in their system it would make them unclean. The Pharisees and scribes didn’t see those “sinners” as people, made in God’s

image, in need of a Savior. They viewed them as problems to be avoided. And Jesus tells them these 2 parables to point them to the value of people, but also the joy of God, the joy in heaven as people turn from their sin and follow Jesus, find meaningful life in Jesus.

The Lost Sheep

The first parable Jesus gives them (and us is the parable of the lost sheep). Sheep weren't the brightest of animals, and shepherding wasn't a good gig.

- 1 step on the ladder above tax collectors.
- No days off
- Considered "unclean" because they violated the man-made Sabbath laws
- Sheep were smelly
- Sheep weren't the brightest of animals either

And in this parable – it's ironic because the hero of the parable is the shepherd that goes looking for the lost sheep. He loses one of them, and goes off to find it. And carries it home (joyfully).

Think about the value of the 1 sheep to the shepherd. He wasn't like, "Oh well, at least I got 99 left..." That one sheep had great value to the shepherd, that he went seeking and searching for it.

Illustration – Your willingness to look for something, almost always depends on the value it has to you. Ever go to the Lost & Found? What did you go there for? How hard did you look? Or what about this one – how hard do you look for something in the fridge? Pantry? The remote?

The shepherd values the sheep – all of his sheep – and he goes looking for the one that's lost. And when he finds it, he joyfully brings it home and get this, he even throws a party.

And then, the dagger from Jesus to cut right to **the heart of the matter**:

READ 15:7

I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don't need repentance.

Jesus kneecaps these guys that are so upset that he's been welcoming sinners and eating with them. Basically saying, you think you're the source of God's joy? Not so fast. Heaven rejoices when people turn from their sin and follow Me.

And if they had a hard time with the shepherd as the hero of the last story, now he's really going to get them by putting them in the shoes of a widow.

RE-READ 8-9

Now, the coin here, it's probably about a day's wages. But remember the 1st century was a bartering society, so money wasn't as common. Maybe it was her emergency fund, or life's savings.

And think through the care and concern that she uses. Sweeping through the floors, carefully searching for it, until she finds it.

Illustration: For much of our married life, I've been the primary launderer in our home – just getting it washed and dried – not folded and put away. And it happens probably once a month or so that I find money in the dryer. Now, if I find a \$5, it goes in my coffee fund. If I find a \$20 or even a \$50, it goes back to whoever lost it. But...no one goes searching for that \$5 bill that they left in their pocket that disappeared or whatever.

But what we see here, just like the lost sheep with the shepherd – the widow is desperately searching for the lost coin. Because of its value to her. And when she finds it, there's a neighborhood celebration.

I can almost picture Jesus looking at these super religious guys, guys who desperately need to repent and follow Him; pointing them to the joy the God has a people, sinful and wicked people, turn from their sin, repent, and put their faith in Jesus. The joy of heaven.

CLOSING

How are we, all of us, like the Pharisees and the Scribes? How can we ensure we don't become like the Pharisees and the Scribes? There's a lot of ways, but the starting point is never, ever lose your amazement and wonder at God and His Word and His Gospel.

The Lost in the room

I believe the primary way Jesus seeks people today, is through the church. Through the local church – people who have turned from their sin and are trusting in Jesus – these people sharing and showing Jesus, pointing others to the life that Jesus offers through repentance and faith in Him alone.

The church in the room → will we be sent by Jesus to go seek out people. Lost people. People like us, people different from us.