

Send questions to: [pastornick@htchurch.com](mailto:pastornick@htchurch.com)

On YouTube: @htchurch

**Jesus criticized and tested (11:14-26)**

*14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. 15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." 16 Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven. 17 But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. 18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. 19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20 But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. 22 But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. 23 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.*

*24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25 And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."*

---

---

---

---

---

- The Gospels show us the reality of spirits of infirmity (sickness).
- Some wanted Jesus to produce a sign from Heaven, probably to demonstrate that He was Messiah. This was a form of testing God.
- This was another sign that the Kingdom of God was in their midst: Jesus was casting out demons by the finger (or power) of God. Jesus is the stronger one in the parable who can invade the Devil’s palace and take his goods.
- People who have been delivered must be filled with the Holy Spirit!

**Who is truly blessed? (11:27-28)**

*27 And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!” 28 But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”*

- All Jewish women hoped they would bear the Messiah.
- Scripture doesn’t give Mary the kind of honor that some people do. A person who hears God’s Word and keeps it is even more blessed than Mary.

**The sign of Jonah (11:29-32)**

*29 And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, “This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man*

---



---



---



---



---

*will be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”*

- There’s nothing wrong with seeking wisdom or even proof from God's Word. Remember the Bereans, who were called noble.
- Jesus is talking about **tempting the Lord** by seeking a sign. We see an example of this when people were taunting Him on the cross (see Mark 15:32).
- The sign of Jonah means being raised from the dead.

**The lamp of the body (11:33-36)**

*33 “No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34 The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”*

- We want to **shine** our light, but we also need to **receive** light. “The revelation of your words brings light...” (Psalms 119:130 CSB).

---

---

---

---

---

---

- What is entering our inner man must be wholesome, pure, and true. Disciples of Jesus must love the truth and love purity!

**Jesus pronounces woes (11:37-54)**

*37 And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. 38 When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. 39 Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.*

*42 “But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 44 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them.”*

*45 Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, “Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also.”*

*46 And He said, “Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.*

---

---

---

---

48 *“In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.*

52 *“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered.”*

53 *And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, 54 lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.*

- Jesus speaks strongly against a focus on externals, and not upon the heart.
- The lawyer takes great offense at Jesus’ rebuke –"reproach" here means to treat people shamefully. An unmarked grave defiles people without them realizing it.
- Jesus pronounces three woes against the lawyers specifically. Why?
  - They loaded people with burdens they would not carry, probably a reference to their interpretations of the Law.
  - They built tombs for the prophets their ancestors had killed and, apparently, for their fathers who killed the prophets. God would judge their system, and Israel would experience catastrophe.

---

---

---

---

---

---

- They denied people the true knowledge of God.
- Jesus' words cause a shift in their attitude, and the religious leaders now deliberately try to entrap Him, to accuse Him. A serious turning point!

**The Lord warns against hypocrisy (12:1-3)**

*1 In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops."*

- Hypocrisy works its way through a person's life like leaven.
- No secret will be left uncovered on that Day. Rather, there will be exposure!

**Fear God rather than men and testify boldly (12:4-12)**

*4 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! 6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

---



---



---



---



---

8 *“Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

10 *“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.*

11 *“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”*

- The Lord warns His disciples: they will be persecuted.
- The first statement is an encouragement is to fear God rather than men.
- The second statement, about God knowing the hairs on our heads, is an encouragement is that God is in control.
- The third statement is a warning not to shrink back under persecution.
- The fourth statement is a warning not to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.
- The last statement is an encouragement that God will be with those who are on trial for their faith in Christ. However, our hearts must be willing to accept whatever God has decreed for the situation.
- To suffer for Christ was a great honor in the early Church. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11).

---

---

---

---

---

**The Rich Fool (12:13-21)**

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” 14 But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” 15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

- Jesus would not presume to exercise authority where He had not been given it.
- We can’t tell to whom the Lord was directing His comments – perhaps all of us!
- We forget how radical this teaching is because we are used to hearing it. The rich farmer would seem to merely be undertaking a normal business expansion. But God called him a fool. With all his wealth, he wasn’t rich toward God.

**Disciples must avoid the sin of worry (12:22-34)**

22 Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 Life is more than food,

---

---

---

---

*and the body is more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?*

*29 “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.*

*32 “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

- Worrying is a form of unbelief, a form of slander against the character of God.
- The Lord gives three examples, one of which is comical.
  - Ravens survive purely on what they can find.
  - Worrying about being short is pointless.
  - Flowers don’t have to work hard to be beautiful.

---

---

---

---

---

- The God who clothes the grass will certainly care for His children!

**Ready for the master (12:35-40)**

*35 “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 40 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

- Disciples should live unattached to our possessions, with hearts uncluttered.
- We can meet the Lord at **any** time.
- The girded waist was a picture of a man who was ready.
- The lamp burning also speaks of being ready for action at all times.
- The night was divided into four watches of three hours each. The third watch ran from midnight to 3:00 AM.

---

---

---

---

---

**To whom does this apply? (12:41-48)**

*41 Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"*

*42 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

- Every follower of Christ and Christian leader must be watchful.
- Jesus promises rewards and promotions for those who serve Him faithfully. God will "render to every man according to his works." Those who live carelessly are at great risk; there is a principle of responsibility in the Kingdom. More is expected from those who have received much.
- Those in positions of responsibility will be judged more strictly (see James 3:1).

---

---

---

---

---

## The Chapter of Lost Things

Here, Jesus tells three parables about lost things: a sheep, a coin, and a son. The stories are similar but not identical.

We see three different ways we can become far from God. We can wander away through our carelessness, we can be led astray, or we can leave through our own willfulness.

Each story shows us something about God and His love for sinners. Jesus tells these parables to teach us about that love, but He is also telling them to a crowd that includes the religious people, who opposed the way Jesus interacts with sinners. These parables encouraged... and rebuked!

Luke 15 reveals the compassionate heart of the Father in ways that can still surprise us today.

### The Lost Sheep (15:1-7)

*1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:*

*4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?*

---

---

---

---

---

5 “And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ 7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

- The religious people spoke about Jesus in a derogatory fashion.
- It was very offensive to the religious people to see the Lord having table fellowship with tax collectors and the people Luke calls “sinners.” The religious people called them the “people of the land,” and looked down upon them.
- Sheep make for a good picture of men apart from God!
- The shepherd seeking his lost sheep is obviously meant to picture God Himself. This was a foreign image to the leaders of Jesus' day. Would **God** seek people like a shepherd seeks lost sheep, wandering over the hills in the nighttime?
- But what had the prophets revealed about God? “...I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep... I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick...” (Ezekiel 34:11 ff.).
- The point here is to show us what God is really like – and if you really are a friend of God, you’ll rejoice with Him!

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **The Lost Coin (15:8-10)**

8 *“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ 10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

- The coin here is a *drachma*, equal to the Roman *denarius*, which was a day’s wage for the average worker. Some women wore headdresses that were decorated with ten silver coins. This was said to be the mark of a married woman, probably her dowry.
- With dirt or stone floors, finding this coin could take some doing.
- Just like the shepherd, the woman calls people to rejoice with her!

### **The Prodigal Son (15:11-32)**

11 *Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14 But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.*

---

---

---

---

---

---

17 *“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.””*

20 *“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

22 *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.*

25 *“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’*

28 *“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends.*

---

---

---

---

30 *'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'*

31 *"And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"*

- The father couldn't dispose of his property however he wanted; firstborn sons were entitled to a double share.
- The younger son's request is extremely rude and very shameful.
- Most likely the son was young, since he wasn't married.
- Notice that he went to a "far country."
- Feeding swine is the lowest depth to which Jesus' audience could imagine sinking. Jesus further disgusts everybody by telling them that he gladly would have eaten the pigs' food. This was "desperation food."
- The prodigal "came to his senses." He realized that he was "perishing." He was wise enough to know that all sins we commit are first against God, and only then against others; that's why he says He has sinned against Heaven.
- He's willing to be a day laborer, which was lower than a household slave.
- Notice that the father had been watching for him all along.
- It was highly unlikely that a dignified, older man would run like that in that culture. This image probably horrified the Pharisees.
- The father ran, fell on his neck and kissed him. This would have brought to mind the story of Jacob and Esau (see Genesis 33).

---

---

---

---

---

---

- The father gives the son emblems of sonship and authority. The prodigal now has a restored status!
- Notice that the elder brother is now the one who is “away” from the father.
- Like the Pharisees, the elder brother was unable to rejoice with the rest of the household. He’s also become “salty.”
- His attitude seems to have been that his work was merely service.
- The father for his part remains gracious and pleads with him. He speaks to him tenderly: he calls him “child.”
- He gently and subtly corrects him: he says it’s *right* to make merry and rejoice because *your brother* was dead and now, he’s alive.
- What are the implications in the fact that Jesus leaves the story unresolved?

**Developing Jesus' heart for the lost...**

In all three stories we see a joyful God and a joyful, welcoming Heaven over any sinner who comes home to the Father. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son especially, we are called to check our hearts.

- We must grow in our understanding of grace.
- There is no idea of payment of penance in the story. Those concepts don’t express the spirit of the Gospel; rather, such concepts actually pervert and deform the Gospel.
- Jesus shows us a God who calls for a feast when a sinner comes home!

---



---



---



---



---

Jesus said, "...the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10b). All three Persons of the Trinity have this focus and have this heart. So, how can **we** develop Jesus' heart for the lost?

1. First, we need to adjust our priorities so that they become Gospel priorities.

We need to reflect upon all Jesus' teaching about seeking and saving the lost. Our priorities should reflect those things and be aligned with them. What kind of Christian service am I devoting myself to?

2. Second, let's adjust our hearts.

Many times, Jesus was moved with *compassion*. He had compassion on people, and He taught His disciples to have compassion. And Jesus was joyful. Do we rejoice over the things that made Him rejoice?

3. Adjust our praying.

Let's also pray for Jesus' prayer priorities. Ask the Lord of the Harvest to thrust out workers into His harvest field, etc. Guard your heart against *the spirit of Jonah*, who couldn't rejoice at the thought of God forgiving the evil Assyrians.

**The Spirit's work in the unconverted**

1. The Holy Spirit draws the unbeliever.

Jesus said, "No man can come to me, unless the Father who has sent me draws him..." (John 6:44).

---

---

---

---

---

2. The conviction of the Spirit.

“And when He [the Spirit] is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-9).

In order to convince people, the Spirit uses the Word, people’s consciences, and uses circumstances. This may be gentle, or it may be strong.

**Praying more effectively for the lost and the backslidden**

1. Ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to them.
2. Ask the Father to lead you as to how to pray for them.
3. Pray for them to be awakened to eternal things.
4. Pray for God to create dissatisfaction.
5. Ask God to create a sense of sin within them.
6. Ask God that they might hear the Gospel.

---

---

---

---

---

7. Ask God to convict them of judgment.

8. Ask God to convict them of the righteousness of Christ.

9. Ask God to convict them of sin.

10. Ask God to remove spiritual blindness and opposition.

“...if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

---

---

---

---

---