

## Jesus' Parables: "Lessons to Live By"

### Part 3: Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- How did you react to Pastor Doug's story of the Chinese man who drowned because the fishermen nearby said "it is not convenient" to rescue him with their net? Why did you have that response?
- We know Jesus to be "gentle and humble of heart", and that he loved to "seek and save the lost". Philip wanted to see the Father (John 14:8-10), and Jesus said that he and the Father were exactly the same. **Why** do you think many people have trouble envisioning God as warmly as they envision Jesus?
- Pastor Doug showed that God actively seeks to restore lost men and women to himself. Tell us about his search for you. How long did it take? What "twists and turns" did it take?
- Observe the relative growth rate of various religions worldwide. Is God still "seeking and saving the lost"?

Notice that there are separate categories for "evangelical" and "Christian". What do you think is the difference?

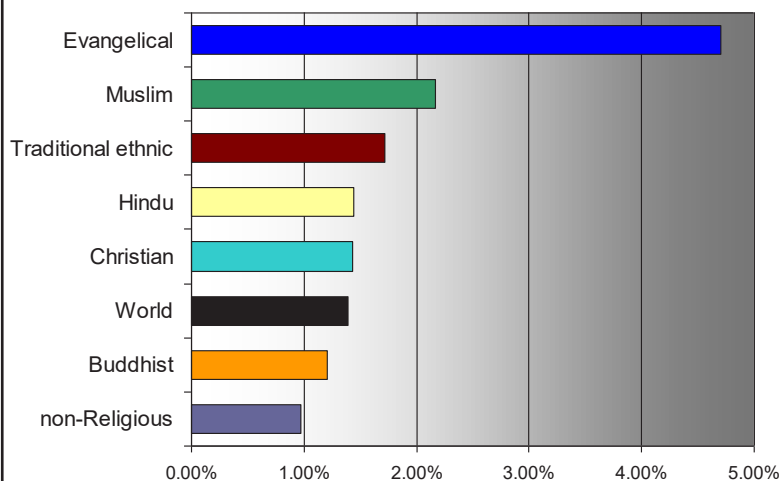
Is TCC "evangelical"?  
**Why** do you think that?

Are you personally "evangelical"?

Should you be? **Why**?

### Annual Growth Rate of World Religions

From: *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*



## Application-Challenge

- Think of one or two people with whom you could build a redemptive relationship.
- Build a relationship with them by focusing on areas of common ground.
- Pray for opportunities to discuss spiritual issues with them.
- Invite them to church with you—then take them out to lunch and talk about what they experienced and what they heard. Love them as God loves them.

# Sermon Summary

If you want to know what God is like, you need look no further than the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Today we are going to look at three parables in which Jesus reveals God's heart: the parables of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), and the lost son (Luke 15:11-32). These parables give us unusual insight into the heart of God: they illustrate what brings him pain and what brings him joy. In fact, they reveal his agenda in the world: God actively seeks to restore lost men and women to himself.

In these parables, God is represented by the shepherd searching for his lost sheep, the woman searching for the lost coin, and the father looking down that long dusty road, hoping for the return of his lost son. The story of the prodigal is really a story of the history of humanity. It begins with the intimacy of a father-son relationship. The son spurns his father's love; he rejects the rules of the household and goes off, independent of his father, in search of the good life. But he soon discovers that life outside his father's house isn't what it's cracked up to be. Finally, the son comes to his senses and begins the long trek back to his father's house. At the sight of his son, the father can't contain himself: he runs and embraces him.

Church, behold the love of God! We were that prodigal. That is our story! Now we are back in our Father's household, enjoying fellowship with one another. But sometimes we forget that there are still many prodigals out there. God is still looking down the road; he is still seeking for that lost sheep, still searching for that lost coin. As long as there is one lost, God will seek. That raises a question: How does God carry out his mission to seek and save the lost in the world? He carries out his mission through the church. We are God's instruments of reconciliation in the world!

Ephesians 3:10 says that it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is made known. It is no coincidence that the church is called the body of Christ. We are his hands and feet. We are his mouthpiece. All around us are people who are facing a Christ-less eternity. They are still prodigals. God wants them to return to his household, but they don't know the way. Church, we have the privilege and responsibility of pointing men and women back to God! God seeks out lost men and women through us. He has no other plan. If we are reflect the heart of God, we must act as agents of reconciliation.

God's people must aggressively seek out modern-day prodigals. But as the church grows and numbers are added, it requires more and more energy to organize the blessing. Instruction, fellowship, and worship begin to assume paramount importance, and if we are not careful, outreach will be neglected. It is tempting to retreat into a holy huddle, isolating ourselves from the very people God has called us to reach.

That was the error of first-century scribes and Pharisees. They were great at fellowship, but negligent in outreach. They didn't understand God's heart. They saw those outside the religious community as people to be shunned rather than as wayward sons who needed to be sought out (Luke 15:1-3). Jesus told these three parables to correct the separatist attitudes held by the scribes and Pharisees toward the unchurched of their day.

They complained that Jesus hung out with unchurched people. Jesus built redemptive relationships with those outside the church. And that is what he wants us to do! The question is, are we doing it? Are you doing it? We must not abandon that God-given mission. So let's rub shoulders with our unchurched neighbors.

Let's build redemptive relationships with them. Tell them about how God has rescued you and given you purpose and meaning.

## Upcoming

9/25 - GriefShare	2:30-4:30PM
9/26 - PointMan Basketball	7-9PM
9/27 - Financial Peace University	6:30-8:30PM
9/27 - TCCWomen Bible Study	9:30-11:30AM & 6-8:30PM
9/27 - Middle School Echo Groups	6:30-8:30PM
9/27 - Parents Book Study - Anger	6:30-8:30PM
9/28 - High School Boys Bible Study	5-6:30PM
9/28 - AWANA	6:30-8PM
9/28 - Financial Peace University	6:30-8:30PM
9/28 - Men's Bible Study	7:00-8:30PM
9/30 - High School Girls Bible Study	4:30-6PM
9/30 - TCCWomen Bible Study (Widows)	7-8:30PM

What emotional and intellectual response do you have to the lyrics of "Amazing Grace" ?

*Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that **saved a wretch like me.**  
**I once was lost** but now I'm found, **was blind** but now I see..."*

Do you say, "Yes—that was me! Praise God!" ? or, do you say, "Wretch?—I don't think so!"  
Do you have trouble seeing yourself as having been "lost" and "blind", unable to save yourself?

**Monday**—Read Luke 15:1-7

- Outline in broad strokes what this parable teaches.
- To whom was it addressed (v. 1-3)? What difference does this make in interpreting and understanding this parable?
- Read Luke 18:9-11. What were Pharisees like? What were tax collectors like?
- What was Jesus' attitude toward "sinners"? What scriptures support that conclusion?
- Were you a sinner? (See Titus 3:3 and Ephesians 2:1-3)
- Are you still a sinner? (See 1 John 1:8—2:2)
- What should our attitude be toward sinners?
- Do you think the Pharisees responded well to the parable? Why or why not?
- Write a prayer, asking God to help you have compassion toward those who currently reject the Christian faith.

**Tuesday**—Read Luke 15:1-7 (Note: A herd of 100 sheep was small. Such herd likely was owned by a small farmer.)

- According to v. 7a, who does the lost sheep represent?
- What answer is Jesus clearly expecting to his question in v. 4? (In today's slang, it would have begun, "**Duh!** What man among you...")
- How much effort was required for the action described in v. 4b?
- Do you have that response to the plight of the lost? Why or why not? Explain and give evidence.
- We've seen Jesus' response to losing a sheep; what response does he have to finding it (v. 5-6)? What response do angels have (v. 7a)?
- Do you have that response to those who trust Christ as Savior? Why or why not? Explain and give evidence.
- Write a prayer, asking God to help you have sorrow toward the lost, and joy in salvation.

**Wednesday**—Read Luke 15:1-7 and 18:9-14.

- Read Romans 3:10.
- Are there any "righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7b)?
- Read Luke 18:13-14. **Which** man "went to his house justified" and **which one** didn't?
- So, **are there any** righteous persons who need no repentance? If not, what does this mean?
- Read Mark 2:16-17. Which category of people did Jesus come to call? Which didn't he come to call?
- In Mark 4:3-9, Jesus spoke to **all four** types of "soils" (ie, differing degrees of receptivity within the human heart). He ends by saying **—to all four** types of soil—"He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Was he inviting all four types to "hear" (ie, to respond)?  
**Do** all four types respond? Do they respond **equally**? Compare and contrast the four categories in Mark 4:15-20 to the two categories found in Luke 15:7.
- Write a prayer, asking God to help you "be good soil", to be among "the sick who need a physician, the sinners Jesus came to call".

**Thursday**—Read Luke 15:1-3, 8-10

- Think of something you valued (money, jewelry, documents, etc.)—but lost. Describe your feelings when you realized your loss.
- Describe your search. How extensive was it? How lengthy?
- How successful was your search? How did that impact you emotionally?
- If you found it, did you tell others about your loss and recovery?
- Why do you think God cares about finding lost sinners?
- Why do you think angels care about lost sinners being found?
- How much do you care about lost sinners being found?
- Write a prayer, asking God to make you more like him in this respect.

**Friday**—Read Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

- What surprises you most about the Father? the younger son? the older son?
- Who was the audience of this parable—a bunch of "younger son types" or a bunch of "older son types" (see v. 1-3)?
- Who was **invited** to enjoy the party? [check all that apply]      ☐ the younger son      ☐ the older son  
Who **did** enjoy the party? [check all that apply]      ☐ the younger son      ☐ the older son  
What does this tell you?
- Did the Father **want** both sons to enjoy the party? How do you know?
- Who are you more like?      ☐ the younger son      ☐ the older son
- Write a prayer to God based on this observation.

**Saturday**—summary

- Review your observations from Monday thru Friday.
- Write a summary statement about the heart of God.
- Write a summary statement about the heart condition of those whom God blesses.
- Write a summary statement about the heart condition of those who miss God's blessings.
- Write a summary statement about the condition of your heart at this time.
- What will you need to do in order to "be good soil"?
- Write a prayer to God asking him to help you know that you are "sick, and needing a physician".