

## **Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ**

### **Parables of the Lost**

Last time...Jesus had very stern challenges for those who would follow Him

- Pre-eminent love for Him...loving/preferring Him above ALL others, including Self
- Bearing our cross...giving our will/life to Him in exchange for His will/life
- Possessions...all to be forsaken, nothing is worth more than a relationship with Him
  
- Counting the cost of following Him
- Finishing what we have begun
- A life not devoted to Him is a worthless, good-for-nothing life

This time...3 Parables of the Lost

1. Sheep
2. Coin
3. Sons

We will be in Luke 15

v1-2 publicans and sinners to hear...Pharisees and scribes murmured:

These two verses give the context for the 3 parables that follow

- publicans and sinners
  - tax collectors and commoners who know they are sinners
  - humble
  - hungry for the words of Jesus being spoken into their softened hearts
- Pharisees and scribes
  - religious leaders/elite
  - proud and self-righteous
  - think they are holy and pleasing to God, NOT sinners, in part because they keep away from publicans and sinners
  - in their hard hearts they judge/condemn/murmur against Jesus because He
    - allows publicans and sinners in His presence
    - communes with them

v3-7 this parable unto them...sheep:

Parable: An eternal truth taught such that if you believe you will understand,  
but if you do not believe you will not understand

Faith is the dividing line between understanding and not understanding the teachings of Jesus

## Parable of the Lost Sheep

To whom is Jesus speaking this parable?

To both groups,

- publicans/sinners (believing/receiving)
- Pharisees/scribes (not believing, not receiving)

A man having 100 sheep: Easily understood in that culture

If he lose one of them:

- sheep frequently, willingly wandered  
Is 53:6a      All we like sheep have gone astray; we have  
turned every one to his own way  
Is 64:6b      our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us  
away
- sheep were attacked by predators  
1 Sam 17:34-35      And David said unto Saul, Thy  
servant kept his father's sheep, and there  
came a lion, and a bear, and took **a** lamb out  
of the flock: And I went out after him, and  
smote him, and **delivered it** out of his  
mouth: and when he arose against me, I  
caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and  
slew him  
(David put his life in danger for one sheep)

leave the 99: A good shepherd (vs a hireling) loves all his sheep and  
would leave the 99 in a safe sheepfold or with a faithful servant to  
go search for the 1 lost out in the wilderness, a dangerous place

until he find: The shepherd would search for his vulnerable, endangered,  
lost sheep until he found it; he would not stop, he would not give  
up, he would search with persistent determination until he found  
his beloved sheep

lay it on his shoulders: The shepherd would bear the burden of the sheep  
on his shoulders, carrying his tired, frightened, and confused sheep  
to comfort it and give it rest

Is 53:6b      the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all

Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep: Did the sheep find its shepherd  
or did the shepherd find His sheep?

was lost: Past tense

I say unto you: Thus saith the LORD

Likewise: Joy, not bitterness or murmuring, in heaven (habitation of God) for every single sinner that repents...who is moved/changed by Godly sorrow to reconsider and returns to the Father

99 just persons which need no repentance: That are safe in the sheepfold or with a faithful servant

v8-10 woman...ten pieces of silver:  
Parable of the Lost Coin

pieces of silver: Very valuable

light a candle: Turn the light on

sweep the house: Turn her house upside down looking for it

seek diligently: Search with great interest and care vs half-heartedly

till she find it: With persistent determination, not giving up

Rejoice with me: Good News!

Likewise: Such is the case in heaven when one, even just one, sinner repents...Thus saith the LORD

Note: How much more valuable was the "Hebrew ring" to Monica after she "found" it?  
Who did the finding?

v11 certain man had two sons:  
A 3<sup>rd</sup> parable, in the context of v1-2 and to elaborate more pointedly on the previous 2 parables (lost sheep and lost coin)

Best known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son  
The Parable of the Lost Sons

v12-13 the younger:

The younger son...not the firstborn (pre-eminent with double inheritance)...  
asks his father for his share of his father's inheritance...now

And the father divided his possessions among the living, his sons

Note: Later, to the Sadducees, Matt 22:32,  
expecting them to connect the dots  
(dead = dead in sin/Is 59:2, living = born again)

Shortly thereafter, the younger son, by his own free will (contrary to his father's)

- takes off
  - with "the loot"
  - with ugly ingratitude
  - getting away from his father
  - leaving behind his upbringing
- "to see the world" and all it has to offer
  - indulgence of the flesh
  - play vs work
- wasting, squandering his share of the inheritance with lustful, sinful, foolish living
  - details not recorded
  - lover of self and lover of pleasure vs lover of God

To the father, this younger son is...lost

v14-16 mighty famine...joined himself...feed swine:

Once all the money was gone...

for every amount of money is finite...e.g. Lottery winners and pro athletes  
a very severe famine fell on Pleasure Land

Gone is the money, gone is the food

The younger son is hungry, so hungry that he

- gets a job
  - gone is the play time
  - the lowest job in the Jewish mind – feeding pigs (unclean)
- even longed to eat the pig food, pods of the carob tree, which look like lime beans (btw...valley of Elah on most recent tour)

Gone is the money, gone is the food...and gone are all his party buddies

When his money ran out, so did they...he is all alone in a strange place

His "friends" did not care for him, no one cares for him

But he does know someone who cares about him...

v17-19 when he came to himself:

In that desperate, lonely, and miserable place, at the “end of Self”,  
the younger son came to his senses

- into a right mind, the mind of his father
- clear remembrance of all he had run away from

The hired servants of my father have enough to eat, and in excess...  
he cares for them.

In his right mind, the younger son has a different desire

The desire for the world, and all it has to offer, has turned to pain and  
suffering

With clarity of mind, he now desires to

- go home
- confess his sin to his father
- accept personal responsibility for his choices
- acknowledge his unworthiness
- cry out for mercy: be a slave of his father rather than to be a  
slave to sin

This is Godly sorrow that works repentance unto salvation

2 Cor 7:10, unlike Esau’s worldly repentance (v26) that works  
unto death

And Godly sorrow leads to...action, a course correction

In this parable thus far, the focus has been on the younger son

v20 he arose...his father saw him...ran:

The younger son, again of his free will, walks away from “the world”  
and its lies and pain and suffering

Bearing his regret and shame (cross), he humbly heads home to his father

The focus of the parable is now on the father

Did the son see the father...or did the father see the son?

The father had always been on the look-out for his lost son...  
looking with persistent determination, never giving up

Even though his son probably looked like a mess and even though he was still a great distance away, the father

- saw his son
- was moved with compassion for his lost son
- “girded his loins”
- ran toward his wandering, defeated son
- embraced his found son (with the strength of a loving father in agony-turned-to pure-joy!)
- kissed his son

before the son even said one word

v21 Father, I have sinned:

The younger son confesses his sin, pouring out his broken heart to his father

- scorned his father’s love and goodness and kindness
- no excuses, not playing the Blame Game, but owning his own choices
- willing to accept the consequences of his choices

The father was in agony all the time his son was lost, but is rejoicing now that his son is found

The son had been “rejoicing” (a counterfeit, as “lord” of his own life) but is now in agony, having not understood the depth of his father’s love for him until now

v22-24 But the father:

How beautiful are the first 3 words of v22!

Revealing his heart of boundless forgiveness, the father calls for

- the best robe
  - to replace his son’s stinky, filthy rags (Is 64:6a)
  - a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Is 61:3)
- a ring
  - evidence of “he is my son”
- shoes
  - new shoes
  - shoes were worn by sons, not by slaves
  - shoes of Good News (The Gospel of peace)
- the fatted calf – a celebration
  - my son was dead (in his sin)
  - now he is alive again (born again)
  - my son was lost (separated from me) but now he is found (is in my presence)
  - our relationship was severed, now it is restored

The younger son	<u>expected/deserved</u>	<u>received</u>
	condemnation	compassion
	rejection	embrace
	nothing	celebration
	slavery	sonship
	justice	grace

v25-30 his elder son:

Now, the focus of the parable is on the elder son

The elder son was in the field working, by all appearances “right with his father”..  
 NOT looking for his brother...  
 when he hear a great commotion at home.  
 What does this mean?

When the elder son finds out, his heart/character is revealed

he is enraged,  
 very angry with those who are rejoicing

he, of his free will, will not join the celebration  
 alone, outside, in his misery

he is bitterly jealous,  
 thinking more highly of himself than he should

he lacks brotherly love,  
 “this thy son” vs my dear, lost brother

he has a very selfish perspective (I, me, my), not his father’s perspective

he has his own interests at heart, not his father’s,  
 working for his “kingdom” (v12b) and not his father’s

he is judgmental/condemning and self-exalting,  
 “harlots” vs “my friends”

he is unforgiving, unlike his father,  
 maybe even wanting to see his brother punished severely

he does not see his own sin and is not repentant (also Is 64:6a),  
 neither understanding the depth of his father’s love

he is falsely accusing his father of not being fair

he is separated from his father...lost

So...does the son go to the father...or does the father go to the son? (again)

The father exhorts/invites his elder son to join the celebration

v31-32 he said unto him:

The parable ends with the focus on the father...the father gets the last word –  
both a word of correction and an invitation to the celebration

The father's younger son was dead/lost...and knew it, at the "end of Self"

He confessed, repented, and came home to his father...is found

The father's older son is dead/lost...but doesn't know it, is not at the "end of Self"

He, his heart, is bitter and separated from his father...is lost

At the end of the Parable, who is the lost son?

The elder son

Now, the father will be on the look-out for a change of heart by the elder son

The Parables of the Lost...Sheep, Coin, and Sons...

- are taught to
  - publicans and sinners...hungry for the word of God, soft hearts
  - Pharisees and scribes...bitterly murmuring, hard hearts
- teach
  - the heart of the Father
    - Rom 2:4 His goodness
    - Acts 5:29-33 gives repentance, forgiveness, Holy Spirit
    - 2 Tim 2:24-26 gives repentance to escape the snare of devil
  - the value of every sinner/lost soul to the Father
    - 1 Tim 2:4 Father's will/choice: all men to be saved
    - 2 Peter 3:9 longsuffering, willing all to come to repentance
    - Rom 5:8
    - 1 John 4:10 God initiates...always goes first
    - 1 John 4:19 our proper response, our choice of a free will



To each of us today,

Do we understand the depth of the love of the Father for us?

Do we understand the joy He has when we are in our right minds and in His presence?

As the younger son learned, do we “appreciate” the extent to which the Father will go to find us when we wander?

As the elder son has yet to learn, do we think our appearances make us OK with the Father?

Will we receive by faith the gift of repentance and

- agree with the Father
- confess our sin against Him
- repent/turn/change
- be “crushed” (made new) by His grace

Do we have a heart for the lost that our Father has?

Do we have the heart of the elder brother toward lost “younger brothers”?

We who are fathers and mothers, what do we do with our lost/wandering sons and daughters?

Train them up in the way that they should go...following Jesus (Prov 22:6, Luke 14)

Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4)

Provoke them not to anger lest they be discouraged (Col 3:21)

If/When they want to fly away and see what the world has to offer

- warn them...lovers of Self and pleasure vs God
- pray for them
- give them to the Lord, Whom they cannot escape (He will find them!)
- know they are writing their own testimony, learning the hard way
  - as did we
  - as agonizing as it is for you
- trust the Lord to bring them to the miserable end of themselves, to bring them to their senses and to a right mind (His mind)
- watch for them with persistent determination
- run, embrace, kiss, celebrate/give thanks when they head home

A pastor to his son, hooked on cocaine, as he kicked him out of the house:

“You owe me one thing. I have changed your diapers, I fed you, I clothed you, I sheltered you, I loved you.

If there is anything out there better than Jesus, tell me. You owe me that.”

The pastor’s son at the doorway upon his return some time later:

“Tell Dad there ain’t nothing better than Jesus out there.”

He is now in the ministry, serving the Lord

[ PK’s are no different than your k’s ]

This morning, are you a lost/wandering child of God?

He is watching for you

He is eagerly waiting for you

Have you come to the end of yourself, have you reached your tolerance of pain?

If not, what will it take to get there?

Your Father is calling you home.

Come!

Understand the depth of The Father's love for you!!!

This morning, are you either not wanting to be found or self-deceived about your standing before God?

Matt 16:16

Think that through

God is calling you, too!

Come!