

## ***Luke Chapter 15***

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- In the previous chapter it was a Sabbath day, Jesus was invited to a meal at the Chief Pharisees' house – with the intent of watching and trapping Jesus.
- These were large gatherings, usually held in a courtyard as opposed to inside the house, where the guests would be seated at a table, but the other non-invited guests would linger on the periphery to watch and listen to the conversation.
- As Jesus had rebuked the host, chastened his guests, and admonished the crowd towards real faith – that if they wanted to be His disciples it would require real commitment.
- As all of this ends we see Jesus moving away from the Pharisees to the awaiting crowd.
- Jesus' last statement was “**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear**” – and look who gathers around.

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V: 1-2 The publicans and other assorted sinners drew near to Jesus – not because of His “seeker friendly” message or His “prosperity doctrine” – but because He gave them the truth and hope for everlasting life.

- At the same time, the Pharisees and scribes noted that Jesus turned away from them to direct His attention to these other people who weren't even invited to the meal, Jesus was talking to those who knew they were sinners.

**Luke 19:10** “**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**”

- Jesus attracted sinners, the Pharisees repelled them.
- This parable, singular, is not three but one all connected parable is directed at the Pharisees and Scribes: they really didn't care about the lost sheep of Israel, they looked down upon them, they didn't want to be defiled by them.
- Touching defilements / eating, becoming one with them.

V: 3-4 A man, a shepherd who has 100 sheep, losing one goes out to find it leaving the 99 behind.

- In that day, the people could really relate to this parable: they know how sheep are prone to wandering away.

**Isaiah 53:6** “**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;...**”

This is why sheep need a shepherd:

**1 Peter 2:25** “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

- The Pharisees & Scribes had no problem seeing the publican and sinners as lost sheep, but they could not accept that they were in the same category themselves.

**Romans 3:10** “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.”

- I've never seen the sense in this; leaving the 99 to fend for themselves while searching for the one lost sheep.
- Anyone who has 100 sheep isn't out there by themselves, they have other under shepherds whom they trust, in whose care they leave the 99 while they search for the one lost sheep.
- If a shepherd were to lose any sheep, it would be required of him, he would have to pay for that lamb out of his own pocket, unless he could prove that a predator had taken and killed it. He would also be exposed to public ridicule as a “bad shepherd” for having lost one of the flock.
- So this our shepherd values the individual and searches him out.
- The shepherds would gather the sheep at night into a sheep fold, sometimes a cave, or an enclosure made of rocks or a rock wall with a small opening, sometimes just thorny bushes pulled together in the same way making an enclosure.
- Always the one opening, the one door into the fold guarded by the shepherd who would eventually lay down in the doorway to protect the sheep and determine who gets in or out.

**John 10:9** “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

- The shepherd would have each lamb pass before him, inspecting them, counting them. Then finding one missing, one short he would leave the other shepherds to watch the flock – then he'd do and search out the lost sheep.
- The lost sheep, out by themselves was particularly vulnerable to predators, bleating for it's master, a sound which predators love to hear as well. The shepherd upon finding his lost lamb would take it and carry it upon his shoulders back to the fold where it would be safe.
- Jesus is pointing out that the reaction of the shepherds of Israel, the Pharisees, to the sheep, to the finding of the lost sheep was un-natural, they should have been rejoicing.

**Ezekiel 34:2** “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”

V: 5-6 So when the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he rejoices and places it on his shoulders, heads home and calls his friends together to rejoice with him for having found the sheep that was lost.

- Jesus declares in a similar fashion do all the saints and angels in heaven rejoice over the sinner who repents, over the 99 still safe and smug who’s status hasn’t changed, who don’t think they need to repent.

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V: 8-9 A woman with 10 pieces of silver: When a Jewish woman got married it was a tradition that they received a head band with 10 silver coins sewn into it that hung across the forehead, indicating that she was a married woman, indicating that she was valued in her household – it was a badge of honor.

- If she lost one of these coins she would search diligently through her house until she found it.
- In those days they had dirt floors, sometime they had matted straw on top of the dirt, there was usually only one small window for ventilation and light – it was not an easy search.
- Silver is the metal of redemption, and what a joy when she finds her coin that was lost.

How was it found? She lit a candle, or a lamp...

**Psalm 119:105** “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

- Where do we find redemption? In God’s word.
- Finding it, the natural response is to rejoice, she would rejoice and call her friends to rejoice with her.

V: 10 Again there is a correlation to the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents of their sins.

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- In the first part of this parable, the lost sheep, Jesus is the Shepherd – He’s the Good Shepherd!

**John 10:11** “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”

- He goes out and searches for the lost sheep.

- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the parable, of the lost coin, the woman represents the Holy Spirit who is searching out, searching for the lost until they be found.
- For the Pharisees and Scribes this was unthinkable, there was no place in their theology or their understanding of God to consider that God would actually search for a lost sinner, but it's been that way from the beginning.

**Genesis 3:9** “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou?”

**2 Peter 3:9** “The Lord... Is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- Now we come to the parable of the prodigal son – where the Father is the One who goes out to receive the lost.
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V: 11-13 A man had two sons. In this type of scenario the oldest son always got a larger portion than the younger son – 2/3 to 1/3 is how this would have been divided.

- The younger son didn't want to wait until the passing of his father, he was impatient – some have even concluded that this younger son was even implying by his request that he wished his father was dead.
- Sadly this son valued the goods more than the relationship.

**1 John 2:15-16** <sup>15</sup>“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

- The younger son gathered all his stuff and went far away and squandered his inheritance.
- In doing this he turned away from his father, rebelling against his governance or rule in his life, went away from the safety of home and entered into the world with all it's vices.
- The sheep was lost through foolishness, and the coin through carelessness, but the son was lost because of willfulness.

V: 14-16 After depleting his resources, squandering it away there arose a mighty famine and he found himself in want, having nothing.

- The Jewish boy ends up feeding the swine, and envying them their meal.
- “No man gave to him” – The world doesn't have compassion or pity on him.

V: 17-19 When he came to his senses, when he came to himself – back to “normal”.

- Sin makes us crazy... 5150 H&S Danger to himself or others.

**Romans 6:23** “The wages of sin is death...”

- Unlike the other parts of this parable, the father did not go out to seek the son.
- It was the memory of his father that brought him to his senses, it was the memory of his father that brought him to repentance and forgiveness, it was the memory of his father that drew him homeward!

**Psalm 16:11** “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

- It is God’s goodness, not just man’s badness, that leads us to repentance.

**Romans 2:4** “Or despiset thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

- If the boy had thought only about himself, his hunger, his homesickness, his loneliness, he would have despaired.
- His painful circumstances helped him to see his father in a new way, and this brought him hope.
- When we realize that we’ve sinned against God and come to that place of repentance, when we acknowledge we are not worthy; that is when we too are in our right mind, delivered from the insanity of sin.

**Psalm 51:4** “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speaketh, and be clear when thou judgest.”

V: 20 The prodigal son didn’t just have the idea, or let it remain a good thought – he took action! He arose and he came to his father.

- Repentance isn’t just a thought, it’s an action:
- “I have sinned” – 19X’s

Pharaoh	Exodus 9:27
Balaam	Numbers 22:34
Achan	Joshua 7:20
Saul	1 Samuel 15:24
Judas	Matthew 27:4

Job	Job 7:20
David	2 Samuel 12:13
Prodigal son	Luke 15

- When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him – because he was looking for him, waiting for him, hoping, praying – that his son would come home.
- The father had compassion: the father still has compassion and ran to his son.
- Old men don't run, but this one did – he smothered his son in kisses, he got to his son before others could..

V: 21 The son begins to confess, "Father I've sinned against you and God, I'm not worthy to be called your son..."

- As the son humbles himself before the father...

V: 22 The father seemingly ignored the confession – bring out the best robe, no doubt the father's robe, he's under the father's covering. Put a ring on his finger – the signet ring symbolic of authority; put shoes on his feet, servants don't wear shoes – but sons do.

- The father is ready to forgive, eager to forgive, to extend grace to his children.
- This is a picture of complete restoration.

V: 23-24 Kill the fatted calf, it is time to rejoice!

- The father acknowledged that his son had passed from death to life – something well worth rejoicing over.

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- In these parables neither the lost sheep nor the lost coin could "find" themselves, someone had to go out looking for them – and someone did.
  - The lost man had to come to the place of understanding that he was lost and how far he'd fallen – then he knew where to go – as the father waited for him to come to that conclusion, waiting to welcome him with open arms.

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- Now we get to the punch line on these parables; which Jesus began to speak in response to the attitude of the Pharisees and Scribes.

V: 25-27 The older son, working, laboring – unaware that the younger brother had returned, and none too thrilled about it.

- If he'd had opportunity, the self righteous brother would have tried to prevent the return and restoration of his repentant brother – how sad.

V: 28 The older brother, like the Pharisees and Scribes wasn't happy about any of this became angry and bitter.

- When the older brother wouldn't come in to celebrate, wouldn't come into the father's house – the father went out, the father initiated, he went out to the older son in the same spirit of love and compassion as he had for the younger son.
- The father tried to reason with his son, he "entreated him".

V: 29-30 The older son expresses his resentment and bitterness:

1. I've been obedient all these years – thinking he would gain favor.
  2. I've worked and served all these years – resentfully, with a bad attitude.
  3. You never gave me what I didn't ask for, you didn't give me what I wanted.
  4. You've been too nice, too generous, too merciful, too gracious; and all this to the undeserving
- He's been out of harmony with the father the whole time! He did some of the right things – but for the wrong reasons, with the wrong heart.
  - Here were the Pharisees trying to keep the law to the letter, wearing their robes tightly wrapped around themselves to avoid touching sinners, lest they be defiled. The Pharisees who wouldn't think of eating with a sinner – I've kept your law, kept your commandments... they represent the bitter older son.
  - They were so worried about being contaminated and defiled that they wouldn't associate with the ones they were supposed to be ministering to.
  - They didn't realize that when Jesus was among them, He wasn't defiled by them, they were cleansed by Him.

**John 15:3** "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

**Matthew 8:3** "And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

- Whenever Jesus ate with sinners or touched them, He wasn't defiled – but they were cleansed, forgiven, and restored.
- Jesus is pointing out that the Pharisees & Scribes are out of harmony with their heavenly Father who rejoices when lost sheep are found, when the coin is found (redemption discovered), when men pass from death to life – it's time to rejoice, not to resent.

V: 31 I've been right here with you, everything I have is already yours.

V: 32 This is fitting, don't you realize – your brother was dead, and now he's passed from death to life – he was lost and now he's found – it's appropriate that we rejoice!

- This parable reveals that there are two aspects of salvation which need to be considered:

1. There is God's part: the shepherd seeks the lost sheep, the woman searches for the lost coin.
  2. But there is also man's part in salvation, for the wayward son willingly repented and returned home.
- To emphasize or focus exclusively on one or the other give a false view of salvation.
  - Both the sovereignty of God and the free will / responsibility of man must be considered.
  - Sadly, everyone in this parable experience joy except the older son who was a type of the bitter religious legalists.