

THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Luke 15:1-32
LESSON 150 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Luke 15:1-32

¹ Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

² And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

³ And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

⁴ What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

⁵ And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

⁶ And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

⁷ I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

⁸ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*?

⁹ And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

¹⁰ Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

¹¹ And he said, A certain man had

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

[NOTES:](#)

Drawing Near to Jesus

While Jesus was teaching, publicans and sinners drew near to Him so they could hear what He had to say. Jesus never turned any person away who had come to Him with a hungry heart to hear His words. By hearing and believing Jesus, the sinners could be saved (**John 5:24** ²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life), for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Instead of turning men away, Jesus drew near to those who drew near to Him (**James 4:8** ⁸ Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded).

The scribes and Pharisees, even though they were religious, had a different feeling toward others. They complained because Jesus was kind to the sinners and permitted them to listen to His teachings. Their accusation and complaint against Jesus was true — He did receive sinners. His purpose of coming into this world was to save sinners (**1 Timothy 1:15** ¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief).

The thing wrong with the saying of the Pharisees was the manner in which they said it. Every Christian says the same thing, but in words of praise. A Christian has this testimony: "I know Jesus receives sinners because He took me in when He saved me."

The Lost Sheep

In answer to the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus spoke a parable which tells how much He loves and values one soul. The parable of the lost sheep shows us to what length Jesus will go in order that one soul might be saved.

In many places in the Bible men are likened to sheep. The Prophet Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). The Psalmist admitted his sin by saying, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep" (Psalm 119:176). Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

In the parable, the man had one hundred sheep. One might think that he had so many that one would not be missed or that one would not be worth going after. It was not so with this man, nor with Jesus who knows His sheep (**John 10:27** ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me), nor with His followers.

The Shepherd

A servant or hired man was not sent to look for the lost sheep. The man, himself, went to find the one sheep that was missing. In Matthew 18:12 the parable tells us that the shepherd sought in the mountains for the one sheep that could not help

two sons:

¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

¹³ And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

¹⁴ And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

¹⁵ And 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 fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

¹⁷ And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

¹⁹ And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

²⁰ And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet 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 unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

²² But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

²³ And bring hither the fatted calf,

itself. Jesus has been called the "great shepherd of the sheep" (**Hebrews 13:20** ²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant). Artists have sought to portray the beautiful thought of Jesus' love for that one lost soul. Some artists show Jesus, in the storm and cold, seeking a lost lamb who is entangled in the briars on a dangerous cliff while huge black birds are ready to pounce upon the helpless lamb.

Danger

One that is lost and away from the flock — whether sheep or man — is in much danger. A lost sheep may be the prey of beasts while it is away from the protection of the shepherd. David told that a lion and a bear came to kill some of his flock (**1 Samuel 17:34-37** ³⁴ 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: ³⁵ 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. ³⁶ Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee). The Lord gave David power each time to kill the beast and get the lamb back. What do you think would have happened if David, the shepherd, had not been there?

A man has enemies, too. When he goes away from God, he exposes himself to dangers. In I Peter 5:8 we read, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Paul warned against false teachers whom he likened to "grievous wolves" (Acts 20:29). A storm may come upon those who stray from the protection of the fold. The storm of God's wrath is upon those who do not believe (**John 3:36** ³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him) and "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans. 1:18).

Place of Safety

The shepherd sought until he found the one that was missing. In love and tenderness, he gently lifted the lost. The one who was weary, worn, and worried, he laid upon his shoulder, a place of strength and security.

What rejoicing there must have been! The rescued, of course, was very happy, as was the good shepherd who called in his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him. "How much then is a man better than a sheep?" (Matthew 12:12). When a sinner repents, he is happy along with the other Christians, and even the angels in Heaven rejoice.

Lost Coin

Jesus gave another illustration to show the value of a lost soul and the rejoicing at its recovery. In some ways a sinner is like the piece of money. Both are of value and can be given in exchange for something else. No doubt all of us have bought something at the store with money, but what can a man give in exchange for his soul? We have studied about Jacob's brother Esau, who sold his birthright for one morsel of meat (Hebrews 12:16), which is like a man who is more concerned about food

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 elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

²⁶ And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

²⁷ And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

²⁸ And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

²⁹ And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

³⁰ But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

³¹ And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

³² It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

than his soul's welfare. Judas, who had been one of Jesus' disciples, betrayed the Son of God with a kiss, and in exchange received thirty pieces of silver (**Matthew 27:3** ³ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders), and thus forfeited his right to eternal life. The Prophet Isaiah told the Children of Israel that they had sold themselves for their iniquities (**Isaiah 50:1** ¹ Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away) and for nothing (**Isaiah 52:3** ³ For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money). One who repents and gives his life in service to Jesus receives eternal life (**John 3:15** ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. **John 12:25** ²⁵ He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal), along with many other blessings.

Recovered

The piece of money was lost in the darkness, just as the way of the wicked is darkness (**Proverbs 4:19** ¹⁹ The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble). The woman valued the coin and sought for it as Jesus loves a sinner and seeks to recover him. The woman sought diligently with a light and a broom. What means are used to recover a lost soul? Jesus is the Light of the world (**John 8:12** ¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life). The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). The Spirit of God convicts a soul of his sin and draws him unto the Lord (**John 6:44** ⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day). A sinner is reproved "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). A sinner is found in the "sweepings" of this world, just where he is and just as he is.

Rejoicing

The woman sought diligently until she found the coin, because she valued it as a token of her purity. Needless to say, she was happy when she recovered the piece of money. Others were gladdened, too, for she called in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her. Likewise there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Jesus was teaching this parable to show the scribes and Pharisees how different was their attitude toward sinners from that of God.

In a Far Country

Jesus told of a man who had two sons. They had been provided with the comforts and protection of a good home. The younger son grew weary of his father's care. Perhaps he had gone into bad company, or maybe he had been reading books that were not good, or had in him an "evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12). Probably he thought if he was away from his father, he could have a little more liberty and do as he pleased. He demanded money of his father, and did not even ask politely. In love and kindness the father gave him his share. The young man set off for a good time in a far country that looked attractive to him.

It is rather sad to read of this young man's wanting his own

way and leaving his father and home. He did not realize the trouble that was ahead of him by so doing. It is also sad to see people today who are ungrateful to God and become dissatisfied with His rule. They want their own way and finally separate themselves from God and good. There are some children who would like to get away from their parents. Some even plan to run away to another place. They think that they will have a good time somewhere else. Like the prodigal son, they do not think of the consequences. May they consider what happened to this young man, and take heed lest they find themselves far distant from God and home.

The young man spent all that he had, and then there came a great famine. He probably had many friends to help him spend his money, but the time came when he was in want and there was no one to befriend him. He finally went to work feeding swine in the fields. There, without food and friends, he came to himself.

Robbed by Sin

This young man is an example of a backslider — one who knew the love of God but turned his back and wasted much in a life of sin. Many sinners come to themselves only to realize that the worldly pleasures have robbed them of every good thing. Like the young man, they are in want. They have not the necessities for keeping the soul alive. They find themselves servants of the devil. They have spent and worked for that which does not satisfy (**Isaiah 55:2** ² *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness*).

The young man knew the way out of his awful condition. He planned to go to his father and confess his sin and failure. He did more than plan; he acted.

Back to Father's House

No doubt his father had been watching and waiting his return; for when the young man was still "a great way off," his father ran to meet him. The prodigal son made his confession. He said that he had sinned against his father and against God. He felt that he was not worthy to be his son, but the father took him in gladly. Perhaps the young man expected a rebuke but he received, instead, a kiss of forgiveness.

There are some prodigal sons in the world today. At one time they knew the Lord. With disregard for God's law, they wanted their own way until God permitted them to have it. They have spent their time, money, and strength, serving themselves and the world. Would God they would come to themselves! The Lord would meet them if they would return with repentance and humility.

Like the prodigal in the parable, they would receive more than they asked. He came in rags, asking to be taken in as a servant, but he was clothed with the best robe, shoes, and the ring of authority. The Lord clothes His people with the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, and their feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel (**Isaiah 61:10** ¹⁰ *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. **Ephesians 6:15** ¹⁵ *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*).*

The prodigal son was hungry. His father fed him — not the leavings of the last meal, or even cold meat, but the best calf

freshly killed. What joy filled their hearts! The prodigal was home — he was restored! No longer did he carry a guilty conscience. He was alive who had been dead in trespasses and sins (**Ephesians 2:1** ¹ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;)

Were the scribes and Pharisees like the elder brother — selfish, boastful, complaining, unforgiving, and disclaiming relationship? By feeling that the house was not big enough for both of them, he stood outside while the others rejoiced in the return of one sinner whom Jesus came to seek and to save (**Luke 19:10** ¹⁰ For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the complaint of the scribes and Pharisees?
- 2 What was wrong with their complaint?
- 3 In what way is a sinner like a lost sheep?
- 4 Why is it dangerous to be a lost sheep?
- 5 Why did the woman look for the lost coin?
- 6 Why does Jesus seek for the lost?
- 7 Where did the prodigal son make his mistake?
- 8 Who rejoices when a sinner is saved? Why?