

ENTIRE TEXT BELOW:

Parable of the Lost Sheep

Matt. 18:12-14

15 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.

Parable of the Lost Coin

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."

Parable of the Lost Son

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.’ ”¹

BACKGROUND:

Jesus has just had some meaningful interactions with the Pharisees in the previous chapter.

In Luke 14 He:

- Ate with a ruler of the Pharisees.
- Healed a man on the Sabbath in the presence of the Pharisees and gave a short, but powerful lesson to them through it.
- He addressed their attitude in going to parties and picking the best seats.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TEXT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Jesus cares for us as He does all sinners, and He wants us to care for others as He does.

OUTLINE:

- V. 1-2 – The Company Jesus Kept**
- V. 3 – He spoke to them in parables**
- V. 4-7 – The Lost Sheep**
- V. 8-10 – The Lost Coin**
- V. 11-32 – The Lost Son(s)**

MAIN THEME OR CENTRAL POINT OF EMPHASIS:

V. 1-2 – The Company Jesus Kept

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.”

The “Opening Scene”:

Q: Who are the people present?

A: The tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, scribes, and presumably His disciples.

NLT – “Tax collectors and other notorious sinners”²

- Both of these categories of people were despised by the religious Jewish society.
- One was getting rich off the backs of his fellow people and the other had committed blatant sin that was most likely exposed for everyone to know.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Lk 15:1–32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 15:1). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

V. 1 – Notice what these tax collectors and sinners do:

1) They **drew near to Him to hear Him**.

- There was something about the message of Jesus that drew them to Him.
- Unlike many of the religious teachers of the day, Jesus had a message of hope for the lost.

Q: So, what's the issue here?

A: **V. 2** – The Pharisees and scribes didn't like it.

- The Pharisees and scribes were the religious leaders of the day.

It says, they complained (grumbled – NASB), *saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."*

- They began to complain and grumble that Jesus would even entertain an audience with them.

V. 3 – He spoke to them in parables

³So He spoke this parable to them (the scribes and Pharisees in the hearing of the tax collectors and sinners), *saying:*

- A parable is using something familiar to illustrate a spiritual truth.
- In other words, there is a deeper lesson to be learned for those who seek it.

V. 4-7 – The Lost Sheep

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? ⁵And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And 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!' ⁷I 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.

In order to help us understand the deep spiritual meaning of what Jesus is saying, we need to first understand the story that would have been very familiar to Jesus' audience:

1) All three of these stories have something in common:

- a. Lost
- b. Seeking
- c. Found
- d. Rejoicing

2) Q: What is lost in this story?

A: It's a sheep. People had sheep back then, they used them for food, clothing, sacrifices, etc. they had **great worth** to people back then.

3) Q: Who was seeking?

A: It was the shepherd. Of course the shepherd would go and find one of his lost sheep.

4) Q: What does he do when he finds it?

A: (V. 6) he calls all his friends and neighbors and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

Q: Wouldn't it be reasonable for a man's friends or neighbors to rejoice with the shepherd when he found the lost sheep?

A: Absolutely.

APPLICATION

Q: So, what's the deeper meaning of the parable?

A: Jesus is answering the criticism and complaints of the Pharisees and scribes.

Q: V. 7 – Jesus gives us a pretty clear answer - 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.*

- So why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners? Because heaven rejoices when one repents.

Q: What is the rebuke or correction for the religious leaders?

A: That, just like it's reasonable for you to go and find your lost sheep until you find it and rejoice over it, isn't reasonable to reach out to the lost soul – to pursue them and to greatly rejoice over them when they have repented?

Q: How much more precious is a soul than a sheep?

APPLICATION

- Imagine the hope this would have kindled in the tax collector and sinners' heart as they might have heard this – "someone cares about my repentance? Heaven cares about my repentance?"
 - If you are in sin, I want you to know that God cares about you and He wants you to come to repentance so He can rejoice over you along with all the hosts of heaven.
- But for those of us who are repulsed by the sinner, there is also a lesson for us to learn and that is that Jesus cares for them too and so should we – in hopes that we will be able to rejoice in heaven one day at their repentance.

V. 8-10 – The Lost Coin

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."

Lost: A silver coin

Seeking: The woman who lost it.

Found: The silver coin

Rejoicing: V. 9 – she calls her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her

My wife's grandmother passed away earlier this year and she was given one of her necklaces. Well, unknown to me, she had lost it. I found it when I was cleaning out the car and set it aside. When I showed it to her, she leapt for joy telling me what it was, and we rejoiced together. She even told her friends she had found it and they rejoiced too.

It's natural to rejoice with someone over such everyday things like that. How much more should we rejoice over more important (spiritual) things such as a person coming to repentance?

Here we have again the spiritual side of the parable - ¹⁰ *Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

Heaven knows the value of a soul and so does everyone who is in tune with heaven.

Jesus goes from using a piece of property (sheep and a coin) to something infinitely more valuable to get his point across – a man's own child.

V. 11-32 – The Lost Son(s)

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.' "

Lost: The son who squanders his inheritance

Seeking: The Father who saw him from a far off (V. 20)

Found: The youngest son (V. 20)

Rejoicing: The father, his servants, and the invitation to the oldest son (V. 22-24)

Verse 25-32 has the deep meaning of application for the original hearers (the Pharisees and scribes) in the form of the oldest son who was not excited at the celebration of his sinful brother repenting and returning home.

The Scribes and Pharisees may have enjoyed this sermon up to this point. But it ends with a very clear application to them that is hard to swallow because it involves seeing their heart for what it is.

APPLICATION

I wonder what the Lord wants to speak to us through this message today. Are like the Pharisees and scribes who see sinners and say "I'm done with these people."? Do we have a hard time

rejoicing over sinners who are repenting or even joining Jesus in His mission to seek and find them?

Or perhaps we relate more to the prodigal son who is in the far country – stuck in our sin. If that's you, I pray that you will come to your senses and realize how much God loves you. First you need to acknowledge your sin to the Lord and turn from it as you turn to God and ask His forgiveness. He's waiting to forgive you, embrace you, and help you.

Extra Notes:

Envy – the very reason the Pharisees handed Jesus to be crucified. (Matt. 27:17, Mark 15:10)

- It can be hard to rejoice with those who rejoice, but it is what we are called to do (Romans 12:15).
- Because we are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) and the fact that the Holy Spirit is at work in the world convicting them of sin, righteousness (John 16:8) and the judgement, there is a conviction that is present in a sinner's heart (Romans 1:20 – "they are without excuse").
- They may choose to believe a lie, but they know sin is wrong (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

V. 13 –

"He had fled in order to be outside the sphere of influence of his father and to be free and independent, but in the distant country he had come under influences that caused him to fall into the worst form of bondage – the fetters of sin had bound him in their deadly toils. He had exchanged real freedom which consisted in obedience to his father's loving will for the servitude of sinful profligacy, and together with the precious treasures which he had received as a gift from his father he lost his character too.

Thus a life of sin and error, or Lord teaches in this parable, is in its deepest and innermost nature the rebellious breaking away of man's life from God. Under a deceptive yearning for so-called freedom such a person enters the distant country of sin, there to waste in selfishness and dissipation the precious gifts which he has received from God."³

V. 14 –

"When a man has sacrificed his life on the idolatrous altars of pleasure and selfishness in the far country, he is cruelly disillusioned by realizing that this distant land has nothing to offer in lieu of the precious treasures he has wasted there – in his innermost being he is left impoverished and starved."⁴

³ Geldenhuys, Norval. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. (1979). Grand Rapids, Michigan.

⁴ Geldenhuys, Norval. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. (1979). Grand Rapids, Michigan.