

Luke 15

The Self-Righteous and The Lost & Found

Image Church // The Gospel of Luke: Inverted Kingdom Wk. 24

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family, I hope you're doing well...

If you're **new** and want to **join in** on what we're doing, or if it's your **first time with us** I want to invite you to stop by the **Connection Center Tent** right outside on your way out! That is our one-stop-shop so make sure to stop by!

Hey really quick, I wanted to get in front of this because it's at the core of who we are... In 3 weeks, we're going to be having for **Community Group Weekend** where we're going to be recognizing all of our Community Groups- reestablishing some and introducing a new one that's launching...

The goal is that we want every single one of you connected to one of these groups... they're location-based groups that meet weekly to do life together... **Family** is one of our core values- we believe the church at it's core is a family which means **we don't act like a family but we live like one**...

We do that in Community Groups, so this is going to an exciting weekend focused on getting you plugged into a group near you!

Alright, if you have your bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to **Luke 15**...

As you're turning there, I want you to remember that Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem- the place where He will be killed... And as He makes this journey He's going through towns and villages teaching about the Kingdom of God that He came to proclaim and that He came to give us access to...

And what Luke gives us is different snapshots of Jesus teaching along this Journey, where we get to look at different encounters that Jesus has...

At the beginning of **Chapter 14** Jesus was invited over for a meal with some religious elite... Then we pick up at some point after dinner, a large crowd had gathered and began traveling with Jesus and we watched as Jesus addresses them...

And now in **Chapter 15** we pick up yet again at some point in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem... *Let's pick up in verse 1 and see what's happening...*

Luke 15

1 All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him.

Note the irony: Jesus last statement was *he who has ears let him hear...* And *surprisingly*, the ones who are participating in this are the *tax collectors and sinners*... These are people who were perceived to be far from God based on their publicly sinful lifestyle... Yet here they are at Jesus' feet...

Meanwhile: Verse 2 **And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."**

The religious leaders were always flustered with the fact that Jesus chose to hang out with *sinners*... It was a big hang up for them... Which is *hilarious* because it assumes that they're not... But that's where they are at...

BTW: There's something that I want you to notice that the religious leaders point out in their complaint that I think is important...

I want you to notice that not only do they point out that not only does Jesus welcome *sinners*, but He also eats with them...

What you see is that there's an intentionality that goes beyond just being nice to *sinners*... He shares a table with them...

- Yeah, there it is again Jesus using the table as a means for ministry...

So, you have the religious leaders with their underpinks in all in a wad complaining about Jesus hanging out with *sinners*, and so classic Jesus, He takes this opportunity to make it a teachable moment...

And that frames out our context... You have 2 groups of people present... A group of *sinners* and a group of religious leaders...

And Jesus is about to respond to their complaint with **3 parables**... Let's look at the **first 2** and talk about them and then we'll finish with the **3rd**...

Verse 3 So he told them this parable: **4** "What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? **5** When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, **6** and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' **7** I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't need repentance.

8 "Or what woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? **9** When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!' **10** I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."

Ok, so what we have is **2 examples** where something is lost, pursued, and then found. And in both cases, there's a call for celebration when that which is lost has been found...

And after each celebration **Jesus gives a point of application**... Where He highlights the joy in heaven and with the angels when a *sinner repents*... Which BTW is such an incredible picture... I don't want you to miss that!

That word repentance is an important word... **Repentance means a change of mind and heart that abandons your former ways and embraces a new way of life in light of who God is and what He's done.**

For repentance to happen you have to understand your condition... That you are lost and in need of being found...

This is important because what we see in this parable is that there's a group of people represented that don't realize their condition...

They are the sheep and the coins that we never lost; they had no change in status...

They represent people that **think** they're righteous and have no need for repentance... And there's no celebration for them because they don't recognize their condition...

- This is one of the reasons why it's biblically impossible to say that you've always been saved... **You have to understand that you're lost before you can be found**...

Example: Some of y'all are like me with my wife- she says your lost and I'm like no I know exactly where I am... The I ask her to pull up google maps...

And here's Jesus' point in light of the context, and He's going to continue to flesh out- but here it is... **Jesus came to seek and save the lost who recognize their condition and respond with repentance**...

And these parables so powerful because what we see in them is how God goes to great lengths and gives incredible effort to pursue and restore broken sinners to Himself...

And what we glimpse into the **intentionality** of God and His **initiative** toward the sinner- And what you can't miss is that God is the **instigator**... He goes out to find the lost, the lost don't try to find their way to Him...

- This is so powerful... **God initiates a rescue mission** for lost people who could never find their way to Him when He didn't have to...
- Let that sink in...

Just because you're lost doesn't mean that you have to be found- **This is the grace of God, that when we didn't deserve to be found, He sought after us anyway...**

And I want you to get this, He didn't seek after us because he had to have us... He's not begging *oh please oh please come to me I have to have you, or all is lost...*

***God didn't seek us because we add value to Him, God sought us so that we could experience how valuable He is**... This is what makes Christianity so beautiful- It's not a set of rules to follow, it's the person of God we get to experience!

- And what you see is that everything your heart longs for can be found in Him!

*And listen, the way that he's seeking after you right now isn't by running aimlessly behind you tugging at your coat tails...

The way that God pursued you is through Jesus- God in the flesh who came down, the creator who came to a rebelling creation and did everything necessary to save you from your sin and separation from Himself- it's His work that brings new life and a new status from sinner to son or daughter...

God's pursuit of you, the way God is seeking you right now is through JESUS! That's what He came to do- it's why he's telling this parable...

- **The question is do you see and understand this??**

Here's one other part of this before we move on- and this is very important... I've told you *Jesus is the means of our salvation but He's also the model for how saved people live...*

Which means that **these parables not only show us what God came to do for us, but also what God wants to do through us...**

See, in the same way this is a picture of how God's been intentional to pursue us through Jesus... It's also a picture of what it means to be a follower of Jesus...

What that means is this: **found people find people**...

In the same way that Jesus was intentional with those far from Him, we too are to be intentional with those far from God...

Example: Gaines lost in the woods... Garrett was not lost but was worries sick...

- We need to have the same amount of care and concern for the lost...

Here's one of the things that I want you to notice as we've tracked through Luke... **Religiosity pushes away the sinner, Jesus embraces them**... The same should be true for us...

This is big... Esp. **in the context of ppl far from God**... let's talk about what this means for us specifically in that context...

- It means intersecting your life with people who are far from God... This is what Jesus did... Now Jesus didn't participate in the sin, but he was among the sinners...

So, what does this look like...

- Get out of the holy huddle
- You are called to be an ambassador not an isolator...

Be among sinners but do it the right way- don't put yourself in position to stumble (1 Cor. 10:12)...

- Use wisdom- *guys don't tell me your going witnessing at the strip club!*
- Seek counsel... Lean into community...
- Know yourself and your struggles...
- Bring a brother or sister with you...
- Not all cases have to be extreme... *could be people at work- and atheist or and agnostic...*

Example: Joe P and me Designated driving...

How does your life intersect with people who are far from God?

God saved us to send us to the lost, He didn't save us to become country club Christians...

Ok, let's keep going... Now Jesus is going to move to the climax in this trilogy of parables... *Let's walk through it...*

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON¹

11 He also said, "A man had two sons. **12** The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.' So he distributed the assets to them.

This was disrespectful... Treating his dad as if he were dead...

13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he squandered his estate in foolish living. **14** After he had spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he had nothing. **15** Then he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs.

16 He longed to eat his fill from the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one would give him anything.

Appeal here to those far from God... And what it leads to... Looking for something in the wrong places...

17 When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food, and here I am dying of hunger! **18** I'll get up, go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. **19** I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.'" **20** So he got up and went to his father.

This is again a picture of repentance...

But what's going to happen... Will the father take him back... 2 groups of people listening... The *sinners* and the Pharisees... Both have a perspective...

But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. **21** The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** "But the father told his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Runs... This is big... No grown man runs back then... Had to kike up their garment...

Look what the father does, covers him in kisses... rob ring, sandless... this is an **identity reset**.

23 Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast, **24** because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

He didn't say let's celebrate head to the garden to pick some leaves for a Kale salad... *God's a meat eater... medium-rare...*

25 "Now his older son was in the field; as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

¹ Some interpretive insight on this parable is credited to Tony Merida, *The Gospel for the Religious and the Irreligious*.

My Baptist folks... Dancing (Not grinding- college students) ... It's in the text... I'm just saying...

Notice: Salvation is a cause for celebration... Some of yall need for the to click when we sing in here together...

26 So he summoned one of the servants, questioning what these things meant. **27** 'Your brother is here,' he told him, 'and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

Notice the brother wasn't at the house... Around the house but around the house but not in it...

28 "Then he became angry and didn't want to go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him.

The father comes out to the older brother too...

29 But he replied to his father, 'Look, I have been slaving many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet you never gave me a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.'

Notice the older brother pointed out all He had done- His works over the years... And he's mad at the father- we see that in how he addresses him...

- *Press in here on religion...*

31 " 'Son,' he said to him, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

Explanation: There's 3 main characters in this story- and incredibly gracious and loving father... This is God...

And there's two brothers in this story... One is a **rebel** and the other is **self-righteous**... Both want their father things, and both were at odds with the father...

Both were outside of the house...

One rebelled against the father, the other missed what He had in the Father...

The younger brother responds and goes into the house... The other older brother we don't know- but what we do know is the same thing is extended to both...

The Father came out to both...

The difference... **the wayward son had to position himself rightly before the father and received what the father had extended to Him...**

Which one are you? How will you respond??

- Are you dead or alive- lost or found...??
- *Irreligious-*
- *Religious-*

Do you see what's been extended to you?? Do you see the Father...?

- Do you see the **grace** and **mercy**...?

If you do it changes everything... New identity- new life, new perspective... You can't encounter the father and it not change you forever...

Ok, let me finish by get really practical here for just a minuet with this parable...

We have to kill off both the self-righteousness in us and the rebellion in us, and the way we do that is by turning to the father... and seeing what he's done for us...

Apply gospel to the religious... the gospel takes us from the field to the house:

- The gospel puts us under the work of Christ...

- the gospel takes us from affiliation surrender,
- from being around the things of Christ to an identity in Christ...
- The gospel allows us to be honest with our sin:
 - Drives me crazy ppl are never honest with one another- statistically a large majority are watching porn- marriages are hurting etc. *and y'all talking about how work is hard...*
 - We will be the older brother if we are not honest about our sin and struggles...

Conclusion [VAMP]

Apply gospel to the rebel... The gospel takes us from the pigs pen to the palace...

- the gospel grants us access to God no matter how bad our sin...
- the gospel shapes the way we see ourselves (identity) and where we look for fulfillment...
- the gospel shapes how we view others- we are all sinners saved by grace- we can be real and honest...
- The gospel puts us under the lordship of Christ... he now defines how we live...

I don't know where you are this morning, but the answer is still the same- do you see God's pursuit of you through Jesus??

*Some of you need to ask yourself if you really know the father...

Call to repent and believe... Pray