

Parables of the lost  
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## Intro -

Not all who wander are lost Jeep thing....

## **Bridge -**

## Book & Look -

### **Setting the stage -**

To start things during Jesus' ministry he would teach and people would come in and listen. Large crowds would follow him. In these crowds would be a mix of people. People that wanted to hear from Jesus and then others that wanted to judge him. Today we call that hate watching.

Even by this time The Pharisees and the other religious leaders really hated Jesus. Finding anything wrong with what he was doing. That is where we will pick things up to set the stage for today's sermon.

*Luke 15:1-3*

*Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!*

*So Jesus told them this story:*

Jesus goes on to teach three parables. Each one dealing with something that had been lost, before we do....

Pray-

## **The Parable of the lost sheep**

Let's start with the first parable

*Luke 15:3-7*

*So Jesus told them this story: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!"*

The parable of the lost sheep is one of my favorites. It really highlights God's joy over the recovery of a repentant sinner.

You see, Heaven Celebrates over one sinner who repents.

God wants us to come to him. He seeks out his sheep, this echoes

*Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15&16a*

Which says,

*11 "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. 12 I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. It continues in verse 15*

*15 I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. 16 I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again.*

We see God's heart for his people, his love for us.

(I have never lost a sheep before. I have lost my daughter before...

In the end I was just so happy she was ok. I was so thankful she was alive and ok, and nothing horrible had happened.

That love I have for Addie is dwarfed by how much God loves her, and loves you.

### ***The Parable of the Lost Coin***

Lets continue, with *Luke 15:8-10*

*“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins<sup>[a]</sup> and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.”*

At first glance, to myself, this was the weaker of the three parables. It emphasises the importance of the coin to her, whether it had cultural ceremonial value or just the fact that it was a significant amount of money for her she rejoiced and it wasn't just her, it was her neighbours and her friends.

This too symbolises how God seeks out the lost with deliberate intent.

Unlike some of us. How many times have you said, “I can't find it...” ?

Then had someone else find it for you...

Husbands...classicly it us lol We don't always search with the gusto we probably need to. We don't have to worry about that with God. He will find his sheep and celebrate. Because,

Heaven Celebrates over one sinner who repents.

Every single soul matters to God. In the mass of the universe on a planet with billions and billions of people, God goes after the one. Because we are worth that much to him.

## ***The Parable of the Prodigal Son***

We see that to its fullest extent with this last Parable.

Luke 15:11-32

To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. **H**e persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.'"

"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

"But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

*“Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’*

*“The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. **y**et when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’*

*“His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”*

Your brother was once dead and now has come back to life.

When I teach the youth I usually ask what are some things that stood out to you? What pulled on your ear?

For me this week, it was the Prodigal son saying what am I doing?  
How did I get here?

Because I find myself in that Prodigal son more than I would like to admit. He had a choice, he could have kept on going and worked his way out. Never admitting he needed his father.

He didn’t though. He realized that he was in the wrong. He made the hard choice and came back to his father, finding his love and grace.

The thing is though there isn't just one son. There are two. We have to ask ourselves at times if we are like the other brother. The one that stayed.

Maybe you relate right now to the younger one. You know what it is like to wander, to mess up, to feel far from your God. God isn't waiting to pounce on you like a cat when you return. He is waiting on you with open arms.

Others of us might relate more to the older brother. We have been to church for awhile. We are faithful, we know the right answers.

Sometimes our hearts can become cold to those who struggle. We find it hard to celebrate when people change.

These three parables remind us not of three different messages, but of one.

Heaven Celebrates over one sinner who repents.

God wants us to be like that.

He wants us to be more like Jesus, like Hebrews says, is the perfecter of our faith. He has shown us the way to live to perfection.

## Took -

1. God's love is bigger than we imagine
2. Heaven Celebrates Repentance
3. Guard your heart, don't be like the pharisees

In conclusion, every one of these stories ends the same way.

Something was lost. Something was found. And then there was celebration. The shepherd celebrates. The woman celebrates. The father celebrates.

And Jesus tells us that heaven celebrates when one sinner repents.

The God who created the universe, the stars, the oceans, and everything we see... celebrates when someone turns their life back toward Him.

Let's Pray....