



YES
NO
MAYBE

1 When driving, the person sitting next to me often takes the "scenic route," instead of the shortest one.

2 I tend to lose things quite often.

3 God rejoices over lost sinners who are found much more than life-long faithful Christians.

4 Once a person realizes their spiritual lostness, Jesus comes to save them.

5 The "church" is responsible for making some people lost.

^| What is the most valuable thing that you've ever lost? Did you ever find it again?

READ Luke 15:1-10 [NIV]

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

^| Why do you think that Jesus celebrates the unfaithful and apparently abandons the lifelong religiously faithful? It's a beautiful picture of God's concern, but how have you reconciled his celebration of the lost, and the way He takes for granted the faithful?

Î THE WAY THE LOCALS HEARD THESE STORIES...

° (v. 1) **The tax collectors and "sinners."** [οἱ τελῶναι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ - hoi telonai kai hoi hamartoloi] - The tax collectors were the worst kind of traitors and unethical financial opportunists. The "sinners" were "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" of 14:21. The religious view of the day concluded that these people had these conditions because God was punishing them all for major sins.

° (v. 2) **This man** [ὅτι οὗτος - hoti houtos] - This was a very derogatory way of addressing someone. This shows that they have reached a level of frustration that does not even let them continue to address Jesus by name.

° (v. 2) **Welcomes sinners and eats with them** [ἁμαρτωλοὺς προσδέχεται καὶ συνεσθίει αὐτοῖς - hamartolous prosdeketai kai synesthieï autois] - The devout Jews observed an old rule, "One must not associate with an ungodly man", This was taken so seriously that the rabbis would not associate with such a person even to teach him the Law (cf. Acts 10:28). Eating with these people was regarded as worse than mere association: it implied welcome and recognition. Many Pharisees were now publicly embarrassed that Jesus had been a guest at their home.



° (v. 4) Doesn't he leave the ninety nine [οὐ καταλείπει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἑννέα - ou kataleipei ta enekonta ennea] - This is one of the places where humor (irony) gets lost in translation.

∞ If the ninety-nine refer to the Pharisees and scribes, what do you think Jesus is *really* saying? How does this change your understanding of this parable?

∞ The rabbis agreed that God would welcome the penitent sinner. But this is a new idea that God is a seeking God, a God who takes the initiative.

° (v. 7) **more rejoicing in heaven** - There was a common Jewish saying, "There is joy before God when those who provoke Him perish from the world." But Jesus has a very different concept of God. He rejoices over the returning penitent more than over many safely in the fold. There is joy over these, but more joy over the repenting sinner.

° (v. 8) A woman has ten silver coins and loses one [γυνή δραχμὰς ἔχουσα δέκα ἐὰν ἀπολέσῃ δραχμὴν - gyné drakmas echousa deka ean apolese drakmen]

- This Greek coin is rarely mentioned in the New Testament for a very good reason:

∞ The devout Jews avoided using Greek or Roman currency because, for one thing, it contained "graven images" which were seen as an abomination.

∞ What are some of the subtle differences between this parable and the previous one about the lost sheep? What do you think Jesus is trying to clarify?

^| THE MESSAGE:

î What was Jesus trying to explain about God's character in this Kingdom Tale?

1 How aware am I of my own personal lostness?

2 How do I view people who are the "outsiders" of my church?

3 What do I understand more clearly about God's character, now that I've looked at this Kingdom Tale?

MY
PRAYER

NOTES