

“The Prodigal and the Son of Man” - Luke 15

Please Stand and Open Your Bibles to Mark 2:13-17

We are now picking back up in our verse-by-verse study of the book of Luke. I held off on this till now because the section we are starting today encompasses from chapter 15 to 17:10. This will take us a few weeks to get through, and I did not want to break it up. Just to bring us back up to speed we are in a section of Luke called the “Travel Discourses”. They began back in chapter 9...

Luke 9:51

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem...

This will continue until chapter 19 at His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

We left off last time with Jesus being invited over to a Sabbath Dinner at a Pharisee’s house...

Luke 14:1

Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely.

Remember this was to watch Him in the sense to look for something to trap Him in. In other words, they were spying on Him. After He heals the man with Dropsy He sees how they chose all the best seats and he is teaching them about taking the lowest seat and inviting the lowly. Then as He is leaving, He taught on the cost of Discipleship, and this is where we pick up today....

Luke 15:1-2

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.”

This sets the theme for this chapter and the ones following. The Pharisees and Scribes have rejected Jesus as the Messiah because He does not follow the traditions of the Elders. They have attributed His miracles to the work of Satan and are now pointing out the company He keeps. They were taught that to receive sinners or to eat with them would make you unclean and defiled so they stayed away from them. I am sure it was mixed with self-righteousness and pride but mainly they were

just doing what they had been told. This is why deception from false teaching needs to be addressed at all times. We might say “Why did they not just believe in the Bible?” but for generations the Jewish religious leaders had built their definitions of the law through the use of the Talmud and other rabbinical writing. They had no reason to doubt what they had been taught. This is why religious people are the hardest to reach. A broken person who has wrecked his life is looking for a way out but a person who thinks he has it all together doesn’t think he needs help. As we look at these three parables today, we will learn a lot about God’s heart for the sinner, but we need to also realize God’s heart for the Pharisee. Remember God’s word says...

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

All means all including the Pharisee! We will see when we get to the beginning of the Passion Week that Jesus is sobbing over the city of Jerusalem of the leader’s rejection of Himself. So, these parables are for them to learn the Father’s heart for the lost hoping that they would come around. With all of that let’s jump in...

The Lost Sheep

Luke 15:3-7

Now, sheep are an animal that defy the theory of evolution. They are animals, that without a shepherd, are doomed to destruction. They are also very disobedient creatures. They will always be looking for a way to get away and often times they would. The problem is they don't know what trouble they are getting themselves into. Most of the time if one gets away like this they are found torn to pieces by a wild animal. So, you can understand the great joy when the shepherd finds the sheep and is able to bring it back into the fold safely. For us to understand this it might be good to put into our perspective. This was their commodity back then so for us this would be equal to you losing your wallet. We all have had it happen. We retrace our steps. We call all our friends. We search everywhere. But just when we think it's gone forever we find it. What joy! We are calling everyone that is worried about it and tell them, "hey I found it!". But guess what's even better than that?

Luke 15:7

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.

Here, again is a word that is misused all over Christian circles. We either overemphasize it or underemphasize it. We either fill it with works, or we act like it isn't necessary at all. Both are wrong. Not only do we know that it means a change of mind and a change of heart but in a minute, we are going to get a clear demonstration of it and how it is necessary. To a Pharisee the sinner had no hope. Tax Collectors were unsalvageable unless they completed a bunch of works and reforms. But while we are on the topic of tradition notice that there is joy in Heaven when one sinner repents. This flies in the face of a major point in Calvinism that is called "Unconditional Election". What this means at that some point in the past before creation God decided and "elected" those that would be saved and those that would be damned. It is all God's sovereign will and man has no choice. If that is true then why would heaven rejoice at an act of the sinner? We just read that God is not willing that any should perish. If what they teach is true than why did not God just save everyone? Again, tradition is hard to break even with facts. But before we move on this parable points to God the Son who is called...

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Now let's see the next one...

The Lost Coin

Luke 15:8-10

Now, this is not someone losing a coin out of their pocket. In that culture women had a piece of Jewelry that contained coins from the dowery given to her by her husband. They usually wore these on their neck or head. Losing this coin is the equivalent to losing your wedding ring. This happened to me once and Phyllis and I went nuts looking for it. It turned out that I lost it buying Christmas lights at Lowes and it was turned into the lost and found. You should have seen the look on our faces and the lady looking though the box when she pulled it out. Oh, the joy! Phyllis is hugging the gal and we left happy and rejoicing! But what is better than that?

Luke 15:10

“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Can you imagine that? I wonder if we get to see the replay of when we got saved? Angels Rejoicing? Man, I got to see that! Here are the grumpy ole Pharisees over the sinners coming to the Messiah and they just can't see it. But in Heaven, there's a party!

I just acquired the four-volume set of “Yeshua the Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective” by Arnold Fruchtenbaum. In the commentary on this chapter he shared what some of the beliefs of the Pharisees were back then:

The * Pharisees taught that there was joy in heaven when those who provoked God perished from the earth. Page 116, “Yeshua the Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective” Vol. 3 by Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

But another interesting thing to notice is that she lost the coin in the house and lights a lamp to find it. This is a picture of the illuminating work of God the Spirit. It is the Spirit that leads us to Christ.

John 16:7-8

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come,

He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment

But now we come to the most well-known part of this chapter...

The Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32

The story starts off with a son who demands his inheritance before the father dies. Not only is this extremely disrespectful but as the younger son he was only entitled to one third as the older son would have got double for being the first born. This was side stepping the older brother's responsibility as he would have acted as the trustee of the estate after the father would have passed. So, this is not something that would be done in that culture. Also, that fact the father gives in to him is telling because that is something that most likely would not have happened either. So, the son takes it and goes and sows his wild oats. The word for prodigal living is wasteful. He had no care for the future and wanted to be the life of the party. I have been there before I was a Christian. As long as I was spending, I had all the friends in the world. But what happens when the money runs out? Not a friend in sight! In that culture if you had nothing you would try to find someone that you can sell yourself to as a servant. He couldn't even find that. Just one

dude who would just give him a place to stay as long as he feed the pigs. For a Jewish boy this in the lowest you could go. And it left him empty and hungry. I mean when you start longing for pig food you know you hit rock bottom. This is a picture of sin.

John 8:34

Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”

It is said that sin will take you father then you want to go, keep you long than you want to stay, and cost you more then you want to pay. It will strip you of everything and leave you empty and hanging out with the pigs. Most of the world is blinded by this and thinks everything is OK.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

But when one is convicted by the Holy Spirit of their true state and the sinner responds by repentance this is what it looks like...

Luke 15:17

But when he came to himself...

This was his change of mind and heart. He realized he was bankrupt and decided to fall on the mercy of His father. What is telling is that he comes up with this spiel to tell his father but notice what happens...

Luke 15:20-22

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..."

Notice that the father came running to him. That was considered undignified in that culture. But notice that the father never let him finish his speech and restores everything to him. This my friend is where mercy and grace kiss. The son only wanted mercy, but the father gave him grace. That is the transaction that happens to the lost sinner that comes to Christ for salvation. The Spirit convicts us and leads us to the cross and when we call out to Jesus, he gives us all the

blessings of the father. The relationship has been completely restored!

We also see the three-fold work of the Godhead in the restoration of the son. The robe speaks of Christ's righteousness that are clothed with. The ring is the family signet that represents the sealing work of the Holy Spirit. And the shoes represent the sonship to the father. Pretty cool, huh?

But now we come to the whole point of the story, the older son. Did you not know that he is the main character in the story? Why? Because he represents the people He is teaching. They would not have anything to do with their own brothers and sisters that had been caught up in sin. Just like this older son they act like they are not even related to them. "That son of yours!" And all the parables are summed up here:

Luke 15:31-32

"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.' "

The fact remained that Jesus was still available to Israel. All that Jesus is, is theirs, if they would just receive it. These

stories are for them. God doesn't despise the leaders, He loves them. Just like He loves you.

John 5:24

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”