

PART 3 HANDOUT LUKE 15 “PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON”

These past 2 weeks we have Studied the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin and the Celebration that Followed when each Lost item was Found! We've Seen in both Parables the JOY of Finding what was Lost...Which Exemplifies the JOY that God Has in Heaven Every Time a Lost Soul is Found!

The Structure of Chapter 15 Can be Summarized as Follows: Verses 1 & 2 The Pharisees' Harsh Response To Jesus' Association with Sinners. **Verses 3-10** Man's Response to the Lost, Compared with Heaven's Response. **Verses 11-32** The Older Brother's Response to the Return of His Sinful Brother.

The Parable of Lost Sheep Showed “With God, Every Sheep Counts”. With God Nothing is lost.

- **POINT: GOD'S HEART IS TO BE OUR HEART...NO ONE IS TO BE LOST!**

The Parable of...The Lost Coin! Here Jesus Points his Finger at the Pharisees and Spiritual Leaders and says...**What One of YOU... Would Do the Same. *WOULD YOU GO AND SEARCH!!!***

- **POINT: A Godly Heart Passionately Celebrates The Lost Being Found!**

In Luke 15 Jesus Uses these 3 Parables to Help Us Understand the Subject of Heaven's Joy. Or, if You Will...God's Joy...Which is the Joy of Recovering the Lost.

- The Pharisees & Spiritual leaders of Israel understood the loss of possessions But, not lost people.

The following characteristics of these parables is a key to our understanding what Jesus meant to be understood and the Basis Upon Which the 3RD Parable can be Interpreted.

- **In both parables, Sinfulness is Not Stressed...But Lostness...>**The Owner takes the Initiative...Persistently Seeking the Lost.>The Owner Rejoices and Invites and Expects his Neighbors to join him.>The Rejoicing of the One who has Found the Lost Item is Likened to the Rejoicing of Heaven to the Salvation of One Sinner.

The 3rd parable, (Prodigal Son), Reveals the Attitudes of the Pharisees which caused them to Resent the Salvation of Sinners, Rather than to Rejoice in it.

- These 2 parables, Exposed the Misplaced Compassion of the Pharisees... And If we are not careful It May Expose ours as well. **(Busyness & Incorrect priorities)**

KEY: The 3RD Parable Depicts the Loving and Forgiving Heart of God (The Father). The Repentance of the Sinner (The Younger brother), and the Pharisees Lack of Joy Over One Who Repents (The Older brother).

READ Vs 20-24: No Matter Your Perspective...the Fact Remains...God is Always Waiting with Arms Wide Open to Receive A Sinner who Comes Back to Him.

- **We are to Have this Same Heart for those Who Know Christ, Yet Fall Into Sin.**

READ Ps 139: 7-10: God Never Takes His Eyes Off You or Me...Even When We Fail to Do What He Wants Us to Do. Nothing Can Separate Us from A Loving God.

In Luke 15: 25-32 We See the Heart of the Pharisees in the Older Brother. This Parable serves as the Lord's Final, Forceful Response to the Grumbling of the Pharisees at His Response to Sinners. The Older Brother Represents those, who Grumble at Jesus' Reception of Sinners.

- When the Father Came Out to get his Older Son to Join the Celebration, the Older Son Refused... His Words are the Key to Understanding his Feelings and Attitudes.
- **VS-29 He says, *I have Worked Hard, But You Gave Me No Banquet.* Favor Based on Works**
- **It is This “Emphasis On Works” that Was the Error of the Pharisees as Well.**

The older brother expected to be Rewarded for his works, and likewise he would have Expected his Younger Brother to have been **Disowned** Due to his Works (**SINS**). However, it was Not the Younger Brother's Sins Which Resulted in the Father's Celebration...**It Was His Repentance and Return.**

The Older Brother FAILED to See that he was Also a Sinner, and that he Needed the Salvation [GRACE] that God Provided for ALL Sinners who Truly Repent. The Sins of these 2 Sons were Different in their Outward Manifestations, **But...Inwardly they Had the Same Roots.**

We tend to Judge Sin and "Sinners" by External standards and criteria. Jesus Always Looks at the Heart. It Is More Than Outward Actions...It Is the Spirit of The Heart!

- *The message these 3 Parables brought home to the Pharisees and scribes is Clear: They had too much compassion on their own lost possessions...But Cared So Very Little for Lost People.*

Their Self-Righteous Prideful Hearts Left NO Room for GRACE! So, Instead of Rejoicing at the Repentance of Lost Sinners...They Actively Resisted. The Pharisees Wrongly Believed that it was Good Works which Merited God's Favor...**Rather than His Grace** Manifested Toward Sinners.

The Older Brother's Works didn't Work, But the Younger Brother's Repentance Did. God's Grace is Bestowed On Unworthy Sinners, who Do Not Trust in Their Good Works...But in God's Grace.

- It Matters Little Whether You are a "Socially Acceptable Sinner—like the Pharisees—or a "Socially Unacceptable Sinner like the Prodigal. Either Case, You are Worthy Only of God's Condemnation.

The #1 Lesson is that God's Joy is the Joy of Recovering the Lost. Joy Is Rooted in God's Grace.

Too many Christians are "Sad Sacks", Devoid of Joy Because they have Lost Sight of Their Own Salvation by GRACE, and Not Involved in Leading Others to God's GRACE.

- In 1 Thess. 2:19-20 Paul found Great Joy in the Salvation and Growth of Others

KEY: We Fail to Experience the Joy which God has for Us Because We are NOT Participating in the GRACE of God as it is at Work in US and the Lives of Others!

This Text Reminds Us that Our Grasp of the Lostness of Men is, to a Large Measure, the Degree of Our Involvement in Seeking the Lost and Our Rejoicing When They Come to Repentance.

Not surprisingly, the Gospel Contains the Clearest Proclamation of Grace for the world at Large...It is Often Referred to as the Great Commission.

- **But I Think it would be Better Entitled the "GRACE COMMISSION"!!**
- Matthew 28:19 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations."

Jesus Makes It Clear...The Way of Grace is Offered; it is Not Earned. And It is Offered to All People, Regardless of Who They Are.

KEY: We Fail to Evangelize, Not because we lack the Training or the Methodology, But Because We Lack the Deep Sense of Man's Lost Condition, of the Destiny They Face, and of the Delight of Salvation Which is Available to Them in Jesus Christ.

LIFE" POINT: Because of Grace, Every Saint Has A Past, And Every Sinner Has A Future!