

0232023 Luke 15 **The Tale of Extravagant Love**

Jesus ends his message on the cost of disciple with these words... Jesus said we are the salt of the earth... but he also added a warning...

NIV LK 14:34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

- Wherever we are we flavor the decayed lives all around us sprinkling of Jesus' love and compassion for the misfits, lost and hurting...
- But if we choose to not be what we are a preserver, flavor enhancer to the world we live in...in other words beneficial to the world as Jesus representatives... Than what good are we to the world?
- We become judged by the world...trampled upon...as being worth nothing...
- Let us be people who are used by God to change that perception...in every place we find ourselves...wherever the Lord shakes us out...and on. And he ends his discourse with... NIV verse 35.....*"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

Immediately Luke tells us of an incident where this is exemplified by the religious of being no value to the decayed... as the religious leaders of Judea, the Pharisees, Noting the makeup of the crowd that was gathering, following and listening to Jesus , the Pharisees and religious teachers began muttering against Jesus for including this this kind of He was keeping...let pick up the narrative

NLT LK 15:1 Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.

- **These were not just any sinners but notorious ones which means famous for all the wrong reasons ...**

² *This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!*

- This wasn't the first time they had criticized Jesus and his disciples for associating with those the Pharisees considered to be off-limits, it was a regular criticism but he outdid himself with these losers!
- But you have to understand the Religious leaders thinking...The Pharisees saw themselves as righteous not as sinners. So they separated themselves...from sinners not even so much as to talk to them...
- **The Pharisees and teachers of the law wanted the sinner punished eternally...and believed God wanted them destroyed...as they absolutely deserved it**
- **The Pharisees, thought that it was the task of the sinner to come to God, to find God. “Repent, and then maybe God will forgive you” was their tight-lipped sermon every Sabbath of the year. There only chance as slim as it was ...was to go to God**
- **and could not fathom why Jesus would befriend them in any way...in their mind he should have separated himself from them completely...**
- **The Pharisees, thought that it was the task of the sinner to come to God, to find God. “Repent, and then maybe God will forgive you” was their tight-lipped sermon every Sabbath of the year.**

So Jesus responds to their criticism...by turns all that around, as Jesus says: “No! that is not how my Father feels about sinners And it is not how I feel about the lost!

As he explains this in three stories.....two we ill study today and one next week ...each one will illustrates an increasing severity of lost. Of the sheep 1% were lost, one lost person is worth searching for by God...

the second 10% were lost...even ten percent lost are worth searching for by God

And Each scene illustrates a different way of being lost.

1. The sheep was lost by foolish wandering away from the 99, and so are many people today.

2. The coin was lost by what someone else did, and we can say that we are lost because of what Adam did and the careless handling of others, but God still searched for them...the exact opposite of what the religious thought...then and now..lets examine the stories

NLT LK 15:3 ³ So Jesus told them this story: ⁴ “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? ⁵ And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders.

Reference to NLT Ezekiel 34:16 I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes-feed them justice!

- The 99 are bedded down and safe...
- This one sheep represents two kinds of sheep.. one lost...those who are sheep but don’t know it and wander outside the sheep fold never even consider entering it...
- And Those in the sheepfold who have strayed away...the question is why?
- We have one clue... the sheep who are fat and self satisfied...and are unjust ...the outward religious...with no heart? Like salt that does

nothing to improve the decay...or stop injustice or demonstrate the flavor of God which is love? They will be judged most harshly ...

- **But Jesus finds them... The lost and strayed have repented...from running away from the shepherd to letting the Shepherd carry them...no mention of any other repentance...but coming to the shepherd in their lost and strayed condition!!**
- **When Jesus the good shepherd finds the lost or strayed one... interestingly he does not go back to the sheep**
- **The shepherd put such value on the lost sheep that when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes back . . . to the waiting flock? No!** but brings the sheep to his friends and neighbors.....

⁶ *When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'*

- **Who are the friends?** Jesus called the disciples his friends...those who belong to him on earth! Who are just as happy for the sheep being found as the shepherd

NLT John 15:12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

¹⁷ *This is my command: Love each other.*

- **Who are his neighbors? Those who live in heaven**

⁷ *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!*

- **All those in heaven are aware and rejoice when a beloved child of God who strays or lost is found and comes home...I don't know if they have a bulletin with pictures of lost saints...but they know**

- **That is how valuable a lost one is to God....he will leave to find it and bring it back to his friends and neighbors who rejoice with him...they party over a lost one found...quite the opposite of wanting them to pay...it is a love that knows no one to lost or strayed to far..**
- ***And he tells another story***

NLT^{LK 15:8} “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ 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.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.”

And what about the woman?

- **She literally cleans house and finds the one lost coin. What does she do? Does she put it back into her purse and say “Great! Now I’ve got all ten?” at least not right away**
- **What is mentioned is that this woman calls her friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.” and throwing a party!**

In God, we too, have a great dad- -who is looking for us. In these two parables, God gives us a portrait of His amazing grace. And in response, we are simply invited to acknowledge that we are lost, to accept the fact that we have been found, to join in the Lost and Found Party, and to be a portrait of thanksgiving and joy we were lost but now were found...

The point is that Jesus was highlighting the crazy, drastic measures that the shepherd and the woman took to find the lost sheep and the lost coin.

The Greek word here for “repent” is *metanoia*, which literally means “to change one’s mind.” And there is no mention of any repentance of the sheep or the coin...and what would the coin need to repent from....

And so I ask you, have you ever known a sheep to repent? How about a coin?

- Do they feel sorry for the wrong things they’ve done and turn around in their way of thinking?
- You’d think the Jesus would do a better job of choosing his analogies and not compare sheep and coins to repentant sinners.

But the Son of God knew exactly what He was doing when comparing sheep and coins to repentant sinners?

- WE need to broaden our understanding of repentance.
- Yes, repentance means to feel sorry for the wrong things we’ve done and to turn back to God in order to follow God’s will for our lives.

But in this story, Jesus is trying to teach us that repentance also occurs when we simply accept the fact that we have been found.

Repentance, then, is our acceptance of Christ finding us. But in order for such a repentance to take place in our lives, we must first accept the fact that we are sinners and we are lost, just like the lost sheep and the lost coin and Nemo and cannot find their way back

Too many times, when The religious leaders then and religious people now when they hear these two parables, identify with the shepherd, the woman, and perhaps the ninety-nine sheep and the nine coins. who never think they get lost – when in reality they are often the most lost...

My question to you is this: “How many people here are the righteous persons that Jesus describes as having absolutely no need to repent?”

Raise your hand. Anyone? That’s right....

We-you, me, and every person who has ever lived and who will ever live-are the lost sheep and the lost coin.

ISA 53: All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all. (our crime of running away is laid on him...How? he must find us and to find us it would cost his life) but he will live again and so will we...

God is the shepherd and the woman so crazy about us, that God would go to drastic lengths to seek and find us.

So Jesus left the angelic hosts in heaven-who need no repentance-in order to come to earth to seek not the healthy or the righteous, but the sick and the sinner...the lost.

LK 19: 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

*******So now, every one of us can say, “Jesus did not give up on me. I have been found.... And I repent from running away and will not get lost again...for I will follow him...**

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