

Lost!

“God of the Prodigals” Series- Part 1

Connect: What was the most important event that happened to you this summer? How has it changed you?

Hook: Years ago, Carolyn and I, along with our young children were playing in one of those Silver Dollar City type amusement parks. The kind with 1000s of people, railroad tracks, ravines, and other various dangerous situations, when our 4 year old son came up missing...lost from our sight. Greatly alarmed and in panic mode, we began to search for him. Several of our friends also joined in the search and yet it would be several anguishing minutes before he was found. It is amazing how emotions can turn so fast. Our consuming fear and focus turned into immense joy and relief. Kids!!!

Can you relate to a time when something dear to you was lost?

In our text, a parable spoken by Jesus, we read about the loss of things and about the joy that is found in the recovery of that which was lost!

Book:

The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin -

1. Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach.
2. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that He was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!
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.
6. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'
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!
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."

-Luke 15:1-10 NLT

Look:

It could be said that these two parables are building up to, or setting the stage for the following third parable of the prodigal son. They are stories that serve to explain how **God goes to great effort to seek lost sinners and He greatly rejoices when they repent and come into relationship with Him.** Let's explore these two parables and discuss the lessons taught about "lostness" and being found.

Please note the occasion that prompted Jesus to speak these parables (Luke 15:1-2). Why were the Pharisees upset with Jesus? What did the Pharisees expect Jesus to do with sinners?

How might Christians today demonstrate the same behaviors toward unbelievers?

Things get lost...through mishaps, thoughtlessness, or ill intents. Left to themselves, "things" usually remain lost to the owner until a search is initiated. Describe how the shepherd and the woman's search for their missing property represents God's search for sinners:

Describe the intensity of the search for the lost sheep and coin. Can you describe the pursuit and the intensity that God had in calling you back to Himself?

It could be pointed out that in these first two parables, Jesus was implying that the Pharisees cared more about material things than they did about lost people. In what ways might we, sadly, demonstrate to others that we care more about "things" than we do about lost people?

Jesus gives us a peek into heaven. What do we learn about celebrations in heaven?

Making It Personal:

Think about the following questions this week and what actions do you need to take or commitments make:

1. Where's the balance between "bad company corrupts good morals" ([1 Cor. 15:33](#)) and spending time with sinners?
2. Should all Christians be seeking to spend time with the lost, or just those with the gift of evangelism?
3. Jesus maintained His holiness and yet sinners were welcome in His presence. How can I do the same?