

Puzzling Parables

The Lost Sheep & The Lost Coin

May 7, 2017

Welcome to where we come to realize our value in the eyes of God!



Ever misplace a child?

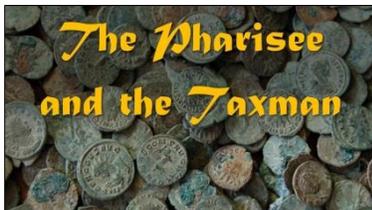
At a mall? In a crowd? On vacation? Pure, raw, panic.

Every good parent knows the intense emotions involved in such a search. As well as the flood of relief that comes with the first glimpse.



It's puzzling to the child who hasn't yet realized that they're lost.

"Why are you holding me so tight, Daddy? Are you crying?"



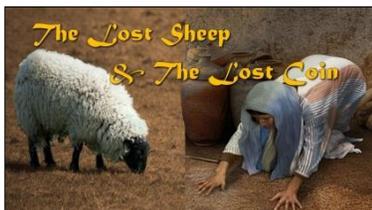
The reunion is so much sweeter when they are just as relieved to find you as you are them!

We're having dinner with Jesus, and Matthew, and Matthew's ne're-do-well friends.



The unfriendly Pharisees asked why Jesus eats with sinners. To which Jesus replied, "I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Lk 5:32)

And, by anchoring a *floating* account from Luke, we saw that Jesus then tells them the parable of "The Pharisee and the Taxman".



Luke has another floating account: a three-parable cluster just waiting to join the party. And, each story ends with a banquet.

In, "The Lost Sheep" and "The Lost Coin", Jesus helps us to understand **the flood of relief and overwhelming joy that our Father feels when even one of His lost is found.**



At the end of "The Pharisee and the Taxman", Jesus said: "Everyone who exalts [lit. raises] himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" [raised up].

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "**This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.**" [Nice self-exalting comeback, guys] – Luke 15:1-2 NIV

Weeks later, when Jesus reflects on *Matthew's dinner*, He mentions that the Pharisees had said *these things* at that time. (Mt 11:19; Lk 7:34)

That's one of the ways we know to anchor it at Matthew's banquet.

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the **open country** [lit. *in the wilderness*] and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, **he joyfully puts it on his shoulders** [*he raises it*] **and goes home**. [This is a picture of Jesus, for the joy set before Him, shouldering our burdens on the cross, so He can carry us home, because: "*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Is 53:6)] Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; **I have found my lost sheep.**' [Just as the Friend of Sinners rejoices with "sinners" after raising up and exalting Matthew as one of His Twelve] I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over **one sinner who repents** [and sincerely turns from his own way] than over **ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent**. – Luke 15:3-7 NIV

And, since *all* have sinned and fallen short, (Rom 3:23) and *all* must repent and return and realign their heart with the Father's, **the ninety-nine righteous He refers to, are a self-righteous flock.**



My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam ... – Jeremiah 50:6a NIV

Jesus gathered every religious leader in His home that morning, to teach and heal them. (Mk 2:2; Lk 5:17)

But, they denied His power and resisted His authority.

So, **Jesus left them to graze on their own in the wilderness, and found Matthew who followed Him to a celebration with friends.**

And, not only do the religious leaders fail to understand that the Savior comes "*to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10), **they refuse to believe that they are in need of His saving grace.**

And, if you don't know you're lost, a rescue seems ridiculous.



And, you won't get what Jesus is doing in your life. You'll be like, "**Why are you holding me so tight? You're loving me? It feels like you're restraining me.**"

Ever have to chase down a disobedient dog? We have a big black lab. Wonkie. And, he's *Wonky*. It takes self-control not to give him a few good kicks on the way home ... to punctuate the verbal abuse. *Not very Christ-like.*



He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the **lambs** in his arms and carries them close to his heart ... – Isaiah 40:11a NIV

You see, **if you won't humble yourself as a lamb, He can't carry you home.** Picture that poor shepherd struggling to shoulder a big, fat, arrogant sheep!



"I will feed My flock, [with His Word] and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God. "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but **I will destroy the fat and the strong, [who won't acknowledge their need]** and **feed them in judgment.** ... Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep." – Ezekiel 34:15-20 NKJ

So, how do you stay lean? By following after the Shepherd.

My sheep **listen** to my voice ... – John 10:27a NIV

Do you?

His sheep follow him because they **know** his voice. – John 10:4b NIV

Do you?

We got'a listen to learn it; and, we got'a listen in His Word.

So, are you passively grazing or intentionally following?

[Jesus says] "Whoever serves me **must follow me ...**" – John 12:26a NIV

"... he **must deny himself** and take up his cross **daily** and follow me." – Luke 9:23 NIV

At the party, Jesus said, "**I have not come to call the [self] righteous, but [self-aware] sinners to repentance.**" (Lk 5:32) Then, He tells the parable of "The Pharisee and the Taxman", "**To some who were confident of their own righteousness**". (Lk 18:9)



Jesus has two flocks: those who learn His voice and follow; and, those who graze and grow fat, unaware that they're totally lost. And, this leads into the parable of, "The Lost Coin", an object which, by nature, has no idea of its value; or, that it's *lost* and being *sought*.

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, **[to catch a glimmer in the dark crevices]** sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? – Luke 15:8 NIV

This is likely a string of dowry coins that married women wore, similar to a wedding ring. And, only ten coins means she's quite poor, emphasizing the great value each coin has in her eyes.

Jesus does just the opposite with the searching-shepherd story.



A typical flock had 10-20 sheep. By making this flock 100 strong, Jesus demonstrates your non-diminishing value.

If you had four children, and one wander off, would it be comforting if someone said: "Well, at least you have three left."

Jesus is going after everyone's heart at that banquet.



The searching shepherd hits home with the guys, and the searching woman emotionally connects with the gals.

Picture a bride in her white wedding dress at the reception, suddenly realizing the diamond is missing from her ring.

Social decorum is out the window! She's crawling under the tables.

And that's how the one and only Holy and True God feels about you!

You are worth the search.

He emptied himself of glory to find you.

And, He's lit a lamp, His Word; and He's calling out and searching, even as we speak.

But, like that coin *and* those oblivious Pharisees, we can be in His house and still separate ourselves from His care.

And when she finds it, she calls her **friends** and **neighbors** together [even if they're *ne'er-do-wells*] and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**" – Luke 15:9-10 NIV

Who's doing the rejoicing? Notice that it's "**in the presence of the angels of God**".



Those angels are in the audience!

The third parable is "The Lost Son", and it's abundantly clear that **it's the Father who demands the party and does the rejoicing.**

But then, *you know* the intense emotions involved in such a search.