

The Lost Coin, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Son  
The Searching Woman, The Seeking Shepherd, The Loving Father  
Stories to Live by—part 5

Luke 15

March 13, 2016

**MONDAY: The attitudes of the Pharisees.**

1. Luke 15 contains the most widely known parable of Jesus, the parable of the Prodigal Son. If you've read this parable before, what do you think is the main point of the parable?

2. Most people would answer question with lessons about God's amazing love or about there being no depth to which we can fall that God won't take us back, and more, treat us as if we'd never left in the first place!

3. Though these truths stand out like gold to us, they didn't stand out like gold to some of the men to whom this parable was aimed!

*Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."*

4. Luke mentions two sets of people who would hear three parables. The first set of people are in verse 1. Underline them.

a. What kind of reputation did tax collectors have in Roman days? What kind of reputation did "sinners" have in their day?

b. What is the opinion of the Pharisees and teachers of the law about tax collectors and sinners? You can hear them sneering under their breath.

c. Who are persons or people you find you have similar attitudes toward?

d. You may have noticed that they are also sneering at someone else! Who was it? Put what they were saying in your own words.

## **TUESDAY: The lost sheep**

*Luke 15:4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?*

*<sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders*

*<sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'*

*<sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*

1. Jesus begins the first of three parables.
2. The shepherd has a problem. What is it?
3. What does he decide to do?
4. What would motivate you to go find this lost sheep?
5. The shepherd finds the sheep. What is his attitude upon finding the sheep? Why do you think he has this attitude?
6. When the shepherd returns home gathers his friends and neighbors and throws a party. What reasons would cause him to throw this particular party?
7. Jesus finished this parable with reference to the party. Now he adds the lesson, aimed at the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Re-write the lesson from v. 7 in your own words, below.
8. Imagine you are a Pharisee who just heard this parable. How would you have responded?
9. Imagine a scale of 1 to 100. "1" is the Pharisee and his attitude toward "those people." "100" is the attitude of the shepherd and the angels. What is your attitude toward "those people?" What number would you give yourself on that scale? Explain your number.

## WEDNESDAY: The lost coin

1. What are the top five things you typically lose at your house?
2. Imagine that your *only* set of car keys get lost in your house. What words would describe your attitude when you have to go on that kind of “hunt?”

*Luke 15:8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?*

*9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'*

*10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

3. The woman has a problem. What is it?
4. What does she decide to do? Notice carefully the words and phrases Jesus uses to paint the picture. As you observe the woman searching, what do you “see” in her?
5. What motivates her to find this coin? What would motivate you?
6. She finds her coin. What is her attitude upon finding the coin? Why do you think she has this attitude? What attitude have you had when finding lost keys at home?
7. After finding her coin, what does she do? What reasons cause her to throw this party?
8. Jesus finished this parable with another reference to a party. Now he adds the lesson, aimed at the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Re-write the lesson from v. 10 in your own words, below.
9. Imagine you are a Pharisee who just heard this parable. How would you have responded?

## THURSDAY: The lost son

1. The younger son demands his inheritance from his father, while face-to-face! He then takes off for “the big city.” While there he squanders all his money on “wild living.” A famine hit (think economic recession for us), jobs were lost and people became frantic just to be able to feed themselves.

2. The younger son, once “high on the hog” is now feeding them!

3. At last he “hits bottom,” and decides to return to the only place he could probably find work—back home, at his father’s ranch.

4. As the son is making the long walk back home, he rehearses what he’ll tell his dad. It’s not a very impressive “mea culpa.” It’s more like a way to plead for a job.

5. At this point, the young man’s father jumps up from his front porch, sees his boy from a long distance and sprints across the countryside to greet his boy and welcome him back home.

*Luke 15:20 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

*<sup>21</sup> "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

*<sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.*

6. List everything you observe about the attitude of the father, and his actions:

Attitudes toward the son:

Actions for the son:

7. The attitude of the father in the parable is the same attitude that God has toward people like the prodigal son, and people who are like tax collectors and “sinners.” What contrasts strike you between the attitudes and actions of the Pharisees vs. the father? (God)

8. What strikes you about your attitudes and actions toward the people in your life?

## **FRIDAY: Our attitude toward people**

1. Jesus introduces a new character into the parable of the prodigal son--the elder brother.

*Luke 15:25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.*

*<sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.*

*<sup>27</sup> 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'*

*Luke 15:28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.*

*<sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.*

*<sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'*

2. Jesus narrows down the parable to his intended audience, the Pharisees and keepers of the law.

3. Do you remember these guys sneering at the tax collectors and “sinners” that prompted these three parables? Jesus lets these guys see themselves in the character of the elder brother!

4. What attitudes do you see in the elder brother:

a. Toward his younger brother?

b. Toward his own father?

5. Do you see any of these attitudes in you toward some people? Which ones?

6. As we look ahead to Easter, God wants you to be thinking about lost people He has put around you. If you have seen some dirty, rotten attitudes in you, it's time for some confession of sin. Ask God to give you a soft heart toward lost people.