

GOD

Enjoy, Share, Love, Message, God, Everyone—part 5

February 2, 2020

DAY ONE: Attitudes about people.

1. Luke 15 contains three well known parables: the parable of the lost sheep, lost coin and the prodigal son. If you've read these before, what do you think is the main point of these parables?

2. To understand these parables we must remember why Jesus told them. This episode begins with Jesus talking to two groups of people.

Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him.

3. Tax collectors were agents of the Roman rule. They were hated by the Jewish people. Why? Tax collectors were given a quota of taxes to raise. How they did it was of no importance to Rome. Cheating and corruption were rampant. There was no legal recourse for Jewish citizens. Thus, tax collectors were viewed as greedy scum with no morals.

4. The other group of people hanging around Jesus was a group Luke calls "sinners." This was a way of saying those with "loose" sexual morals, or worse. This was the group of people most folks thought of as "*those* people." They were sensuous people with no morals.

5. As Jesus is talking to these two groups of people, two very different groups of people were observing this and muttering amongst themselves. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were Jewish leaders and "bigwigs." They considered themselves the standard bearers of morality.

Luke 15:2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

6. What attitudes do you sense in the Pharisees and teachers of the law in this setting?

a. Attitudes toward the tax collectors and sinners?

b. Attitudes about themselves?

7. Why do you think the tax collectors and sinners like to hang out with Jesus?

DAY TWO: 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?

⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

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

⁷ 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 he 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.

DAY THREE: The lost coin

1. What are the top three things you typically lose at your house?
2. Imagine that your *only* set of car keys gets 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?"

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 in verse 8. As you observe the woman searching, what do you “see” in her?

Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.'

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.

Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

9. Imagine you are a Pharisee who just heard this parable. How would you have responded?

DAY FOUR: The lost son

1. A father has two sons, property, and servants. One of his sons does the unthinkable and disgraceful! The younger son demands his inheritance from his father, while face-to-face!

2. He then takes off for “the big city.” While there he spends all his money on “wild living.” He finally has the freedom with no restraints he has craved. But eventually the money runs out. All of it.

3. A famine hits (think economic recession for us), jobs were lost and people became frantic just to be able to feed themselves.

4. The younger son scrambles to find a job—any job. Once “high on the hog” is now feeding them!

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

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

²² *"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. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ 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:

The father’s attitudes toward the son:

The father’s 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)

DAY FIVE: God's attitude toward people

1, How does Jesus' view of God differ from yours?

2. You may believe that God really does love you. Great. But in the course of daily life, our view of God is liable to be shaky. Put a check next to how you sometimes view God:

___ God loves me as long as I'm pretty obedient.

___ When I'm disobedient, it seems I need to wallow in some amount of feeling bad about myself for a few days. Then, I know God loves me.

___ When I'm disobedient, God's love allows me to get "right back up on the horse."

3. How did Jesus' view of God the Father differ from the Pharisees' view of God the Father?

4. To drive home the difference for the Pharisees, Jesus introduces the second brother, 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. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.*

²⁷ '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. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'*

5. What attitudes do you see in the older brother?

6. In what ways do you relate to the older brother's attitudes?

7. What strikes you about God the Father?