



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of the Lost Found!

Luke 15:1-32

Message #46 of 50 – S829

Sermon given on February 3, 2019



Sunday Morning Service

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A Story of the Lost Found!

Luke 15:1-32

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 15**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Almost everyone can relate to something of great value or importance going missing
- There can be emotions of fear, frustration, anger, desperation
- And then when the lost thing is found those emotions are replaced by feelings of relief, joy, peace
- The greater the value or importance of the lost thing will determine just how great those emotions will be – a missing child vs. keys
- In today's text Jesus is going to use three parables to describe how God feels when His greatest creation get is lost, and how He feels when they are found
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of the Lost Found!**
- Jesus was often criticized for the company He kept
- **Luke 15:1-2**
- Tax collectors were universally disliked because they were collaborating with the Romans who had conquered Israel and they were notoriously corrupt
- 'sinners' were people who lived lifestyles that were obviously immoral
- To the Pharisees and scribes they were all unredeemable, beyond the hope of salvation
- The fact that Jesus 'received' them and ate with them, to the Pharisees was to be just like them
- Paul would later say sinners was why Jesus came **1 Timothy 1:15**
This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...
- You can't save what you won't reach out and touch

- To the Pharisees, the tax collectors and sinner were untouchables – to Jesus, they were His reason for being here
 - **Luke 15:3**
 - Jesus is going to give us three parables describing four lost things – three are found
 - All three have the same theme: God’s joy when the lost are found
 - First one – **The Lost Sheep**
 - **Luke 15:4-6**
 - Sheep are virtually helpless on their own
 - They have a tendency to wander off – they will focus on a tuft of grass, once done, will move on to the next, until they are lost and alone
 - They get lost through inattention – just not paying attention to where they are
 - The man in this parable is God – He cares about the sheep – He will seek it until He finds it
 - The traditional viewpoint was that God would accept repentant sinners if they came to Him, but the idea that He would seek them out was ‘new’ **Genesis 3:8-9**
- And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”**
- God has been seeking repentant sinners since they first started sinning
 - And once back there is a celebration
 - **Luke 15:7**
 - Notice there is a role for the lost sheep in being found – ‘repent’
 - To repent in this context, the lost sheep admits that they have been indifferent to God and lived as they wanted to
 - This is the ‘good person’ – they aren’t particularly wicked – just not interested in God or what He wants
 - God cares about the lost – and when they repent – heaven rejoices
 - The second parable is like the first – **The Lost Coin**
 - **Luke 15:8-10**
 - In the first parable we saw that God seeks the lost because He cares about them

- In this one, God seeks the lost because they are valuable to Him

Matthew 16:26

**For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

- The coin is lost through carelessness
- These are people who through their bad choices are far from God
- Wrong people, wrong places, wrong websites
- This person carelessly choosing whatever feels good or right to them
- We know the value that God puts on people because of the price He paid to save them **1 Peter 1:18-19**

...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

- This parable also ends with a celebration in response to repentance
- The third parable may be the most famous one in the world – **The Lost Son**

Luke 15:11-16

- The sheep was lost because of indifference
- The coin was lost because of carelessness
- The son was lost because of willfulness – he chose to be lost
- He had a choice – to stay at home under his father’s authority or leave and be under no one’s authority
- The best picture we have of this is someone who has grown up in the church or in a Christian home – didn’t have parent’s faith
- In this parable, the God is the father
- He lets people choose for themselves how they want to live
- In the first two parables God seeks the sinner
- But not so in this parable – He waits for them to return
- The sheep and the coin are pictures of people who have little or no knowledge of God
- The son is a picture is someone who has enough knowledge to choose to love God or not – the prodigal chooses to love themselves rather than God – they want to live life as they choose
- God let’s them choose, and then He waits

- God knows something that they don't – that eventually they will discover that life apart from God is not what they thought it was going to be

- **Luke 15:17-19**

- In all three parables the lost came to a point of repentance
- The lost sheep repented for their indifference
- The lost coin repented for their carelessness
- And here, the lost son repents for his willfulness
- The message is clear – without repentance there can be no salvation
- The willful son remembered what it was like in his father's house

Romans 2:4

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- And so, the lost son heads back, not expecting what happens next
- Notice what the father does

- **Luke 15:20**

- The father wasn't seeking the lost son, but he was watching for him
- Waiting for him to come to his senses
- His son was probably a stinking, pathetic mess, and yet he ran to him (very undignified), fell on his neck (embraced him), and kissed him
- The lost son gives the speech he prepared

- **Luke 15:21-24**

- The father wouldn't let him finish
- He is overjoyed – 'my son was dead and is alive again'
- The Bible teaches us that all of us were lost – either through indifference, carelessness, or willfulness

- We were all dead, like the lost son **Ephesians 2:1-3**

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- You were created to be a child of God, to be the object of His gracious love
- The main lesson of the parable of the lost son is that God wants you to come to Him

- You don't have to get your act together, you don't have to clean yourself up, you don't have to bring a gift, or make an offering - just come back to Him
- This parable isn't finished yet – there is one more character
- **Luke 15:25-30**
- Jesus is bringing this back to the Pharisees and scribes
- They are the 'older son'
- Jesus is receiving and eating with the tax collectors and sinners and they are offended by that
- Tax collectors and sinners are hearing about the kingdom of God and getting saved and the Pharisees and scribes are upset (angry)
- What do you think it says about you if all of heaven is rejoicing and you are angry?
- The 'older son' is just as lost as his brother was, he just doesn't believe that
- This might be the most tragic part of this parable
- The parable ends without telling us how the 'older brother' responds
- All of us were lost sheep, or lost coins, or lost sons – and if you are a believer – you have been found
- Sometimes the found ones can act like the 'older son' toward the lost
- Would you be offended if 'sinners' – people who are not like you – started showing up at church?
- The cure – repent – ask God to change your heart – to make it more like His.
- God is seeking the lost sheep and coins, and He is waiting for lost sons to return
- And when they are found or return – all heaven rejoices
- Regularly remind yourself that once you were lost, now you are found, once you were dead, but now you are alive – rejoice and heaven will rejoice with you
- And then tell the story of how you were once lost, but God found you and changed your life and eternity
- It's a good story, a story about Jesus – go tell it!
- **Pray!**